History in Transition: The Idea of Temporality in Early American History Writing

History in Transition:

The Idea of Temporality in Early American History Writing

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Conclusion

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Illustrations

Introduction: America and History

America, I argue, is a country of temporal consciousness and the ongoing preoccupation with history.

Allegedly, America was born of the break with the past, so it lacks a definite sense of history, all future-minded and continually unburdened of past customs and traditions. Thomas Jefferson once proudly declared, "We can no longer say there is nothing new under the sun. For this whole chapter in the history of man is new. The great extent of our Republic is new. Its sparse habitation is new. The mighty wave of public opinion which has rolled over it is new."[1] The same insistence on newness echoed throughout later accounts of America. John Lothrop Motley, for instance, stressed the perpetual youthfulness of the nation: "Every thing here is fresh, and of yesterday. The Present stretches to the Pilgrims; for the life of a nation is not measured by years."[2] And when Franklin D. Roosevelt claimed that Americans "are all bound together by hope of a common future rather than by reverence for a common past,"[3] it might have sounded like a matter of course to most Americans, for whom, in Henry Steele Commager's words, "the idea of revision and amendment seemed the common sense of the matter," so "Clearly the New World was the worst possible market to which you could carry this shop-worn bric-a-brac of Prescription and Tradition."[4]

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1. Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Priestley, Washington, March 21, 1801, reprinted in Thomas Jefferson, *The Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010): 284; and also in Jefferson, *Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984): 1086.

2. John Lothrop Motley, "Polity of the Puritans," *North American Review* 69 (1849): 493

3. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Statue of Liberty," October 28, 1936, reprinted in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt*, Volume Five — The People Approve 1936 (New York: Random House, 1938): 543

4. Henry Steele Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment* (1978; London: Phoenix Press, 2000): 201, 202.

Many other historians have evoked the traditional notion of America's freedom from the past one way or another. See among others, Daniel Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition*

These dictions of "forever young America" have substantial rhetorical potency to be sure, but they might be misleading and create a wrong impression that historical inquiry has been persistently downplayed in America since the very inception of its national life. It was right in the middle of the revolutionary turmoil that Ebenezer Hazard began to compile his Americana collection, which was later published under the title of *Historical Collections: Consisting of State Papers, and Other Authentic Documents* (2 vols., 1792-94). Jedidiah Morse's project of geographico-history started just around the same time with such volumes as *The American Geography* (1789) and *The History of America* (1790). The early federalist years witnessed also the foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the first institution of its kind in the whole country, in 1791. And what happened in the following century — the ceaseless publication of history writings, most notably those by the so-called romantic historians through the mid- and late-nineteenth century, and the great mushrooming of local historical societies all over the states — fully testified to the American passion for history. The idea of history had consisted in a core part of American mentality for the first century of its nationhood, which "was, indeed, a history-conscious age."[5] The present study focuses on American history writing and its related enterprises from the early national era through the late-nineteenth century, and traces the way America addressed the problem of temporality and historicity. As will be illustrated in the following discussions, the period was that of a methodological vacuum between the demise of the typological worldview and the rise of evolutionism. American historians of the day performed a series of experiments on historical representation without any definitive master frame of reference.

What was at stake in American history writing at that time was how to deal with the

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in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); and Myra Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). I am indebted to Jehlen's doomed view of American ahistoricity, especially in my discussion of American geographico-history in Chapters Five and Seven.

5. Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 195. As for more about the nineteenth-century booming of historical writings, see William Charvat, *Literary Publishing in America 1790-1850* (1959; Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993) and Buell, *New England Literary Culture*, 23-55, 193-260.

reality of transition or the ever-mutable world. American newness, as typically represented in Jefferson's claim on it, might be better understood as a vision of constant renewal, which underscored the awareness of historical transiency or changeability, but never meant the total cancellation of the past. Jefferson actually tried to manage and control the problem of historical change with his unique idea of the generational cycle. "I set out on this ground," he once wrote to James Madison, "which I suppose to be self evident, '*that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living*.'" For him, the world should be always new, and the dead past had no right to bind the living present, whether in the case of land title, law or debt. He estimated the length of a generation at nineteen years, and it was "the term beyond which neither the representatives of a nation, nor even the whole nation itself assembled, can validly extend a debt," and even "The constitution and the laws of their predecessors extinguished then in their natural course with those who gave them being. This could preserve that being till it ceased to be itself, and no longer. Every constitution then, and every law, naturally expires at the end of 19 years."[6] Evidently, the point of Jefferson's nineteen-year refreshing cycle lay in the infinite malleability and unfixedness of American society, the world in perpetual transition. What drew the attention of American historians was the descriptive possibilities of the still unstoried continent, wide open to changes and interpretations, wholly independent of prescriptive conventions of the ready-made narratives. The development of American history writing then proceeded along a series of trials — and, of course, errors — to capture the dynamics of historical changes and describe the temporality and mutability of

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6. Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Paris, September 6, 1789, reprinted in *The Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010): 264, 265, 266.

In his later correspondence with John Adams, Jefferson harshly criticized "the enemies of reform," who "denied improvement, and advocated steady adherence to the principles, practices and institutions of our fathers, which they represented as the consummation of wisdom, and akmé of excellence, beyond which the human mind could never advance" (Jefferson to John Adams, June 15, 1813, in *Writings*, 1278-79). His vision of American newness extended to the subject of lexicon, as he called himself "a zealous one to the *Neology*" who believes "The new circumstances under which we are placed, call for new words, new phrases, and for the transfer of old words to new words" (Jefferson to John Waldo, August 16, 1813, in *Writings*, 1295-96).

American society. As John E. Smith insists, "American thinkers were among the first to recognize the reality of change, to take, as the phrase goes, 'time seriously,'" and "they were trying to adjust the traditional conception of the 'timelessness' of truth to the facts about the temporal growth of knowledge in the sciences."[7] The idea of history was gradually, if not fully, renovated in the American setting roughly from the late-eighteenth century through the antebellum period.

As a subject of academic inquiry, American history writing from the early national era to the late nineteenth century has been not a field attracting many scholars. One of the reasons is that the period in question was before the full professionalization of historical studies as an academic discipline, which admittedly dated from the foundation of the American Historical Association in 1884. To put it another way, the historians of that era were not a well-organized set of researchers but a diversity of independent literati. The first attempt at the reassessment of early American history writing was then to put more stress on historians themselves than on their writings, and its chief purpose was to reevaluate their contribution to the still unestablished discipline. Herbert Baxter Adams, professor of history at Johns Hopkins University and one of the founders of the American Historical Association, first maintained that "it is time to review in a candid and reasonable spirit what our historical predecessors actually did, under obstacles that would have dismayed men of less courage,"[8] and compiled the life and writings of Jared Sparks, the first professor of history at Harvard College, the editor of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin papers, and the mastermind of the *Library of American Biography* series. Adams's student, John Spencer Bassett also set down to the task of acknowledging the works of early historians in *The Middle Group of American Historians* (1917), which featured Jeremy Belknap, Sparks, George Bancroft, William Hickling Prescott, Peter Force and other historians at what Bassett called "the middle period," the century from the post-revolutionary years up to the foundation of

7. John E. Smith, *American Philosophical Vision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 193

8. Herbert Baxter Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, vol. 1 (1893; Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1970): xxi.

the American Historical Association in 1884.[9] Michael Kraus's *A History of American History* (1937; later abridged into *The Writing of American History*, 1953) stretched the time frame back to the colonial era and presented a general survey of American historians and their achievements. Indeed these volumes are informative and useful as reference works to know which historian did what, and actually I refer to them in the following pages, but, predictably enough, they are in essence tributary memorials to the early forerunners of history writing, and that often compromises their critical judgment of the texts. Those were the days of the Great Man Theory in the history of American history.

The next generation of American historiographical studies rose in the mid-twentieth century, chiefly concerned with the literary nature of history writing. This made sense because, as I mentioned above, early history writing had been a literary avocation for the intellectual elite in the first place. David Levin's classic study of mid-nineteenth-century historians, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (1959), named these title historians as romantic men of letters, whose focus was not on data-ridden compendia, but on narrative coherence implemented with clear-cut moral principles, conventional character types, and "if possible, some 'poetic' — that is, melancholy — incidents," just as in Walter Scott's and James Fenimore Cooper's historical novels.[10] As a literary narrative, moreover, there had to be a plot or a prevailing pattern to weave a whole story together. Levin and other critics agreed that every romantic history was a dramatization of the law of progress both material and spiritual. According to David D. Van Tassel, the idea of progress constituted the core part of American philosophy of history, providing each historical text with an overall story line or "an underlying pattern of laws which gave order to the chaos of history."[11] Allegedly, America was born as the very incarnation of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideas, or "the extension of the progress of the Old World," just as the

9. See John Spencer Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917)

10. David Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (1959; New York: A Harbinger Book, 1963): 11.

11. David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America 1607-1884* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960): 113-14

American Revolution was "a step in the emancipation and progress of humanity." Progress had been particularly "American experience" from the outset and, for historians, a unifying theme of the national history.[12]

Besides the idea of progress, critics also have explored different but mutually related designs that informed the story of the birth and development of the nation. David D. Van Tassel discerned a general pattern of early American historiographical enterprises in their recurring preoccupation with the conflict between nationalism and localism, or republicanism and individualism. Since the close of the revolution, Van Tassel suggested, American history writing had been a field of "the battle between local and national history," just as American society itself had been a scene of the power struggle between the clique of state-oriented localism and that of nationalist centralization.[13] American history writing had started out as an act of local pride early in the colonial era, and the tradition of local history persisted well into the nineteenth century with states' historical societies as "bastions of localism."[14] Still, the general trend was increasingly toward the nationalist interpretation of history, as the revolutionary war and other national crises occasioned the unity of the nation as a whole. And a growing number of local historians became inspired by the nationalist point of view, although the local-based document hunting still remained their primary concentration. The point was then to balance, if not fully reconcile, these two different perspectives, and one of such efforts was the conceptualization of the people's history, in which history grew "less and less the story of a few great men and more the collective biography of a people," illustrating their customs and manners with particular details and highlighting a general contour of national character as well.[15] This long-standing opposition between nationalism and localism cropped up in different situations and different shapes all through early American history writing, and I will discuss a couple of its varieties in the

12. George H. Callcott, *History in the United States 1800-1860: Its Practice and Purpose* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970): 4, 162.

13. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 47.

14. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 100.

15. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 114

chapters that follow.

The attention to the literary nature of history writing was followed next by the epistemological critique of historical texts, or the inquiry into what made each historical account coherent and intelligible. Hayden White's schematization of historical narratives as rhetorical constructs was crucial in steering modern historiographical studies from what is narrated to how it is narrated or from the content of history to its authorial, social, and political context.[16] Attending to epistemological frameworks of historical texts, scholars first placed under strict scrutiny the tenet of nineteenth-century scientific history and its motto, *i.e.*, the objective truth of history. Exhaustive document hunting or "the cult of facts" had been a hallmark of American history writing since its fledgling years, and historians had employed a great accumulation of primary sources to attain objective truthfulness in their statements and thus establish history as an empirical science.[17] And yet, scientific objectivity turned out a long-cherished myth of history writing. Critics like Peter Novick and Peter Charles Hoffer demystified the noble but delusive dream of historical objectivity; what was thought of as solid truth was actually a truth claim, which was only tenable within a temporary consensus among a group of interested people. As long as the consensus building was an ongoing process of continual fine-tuning, any resulting truth claim could never be definitive and there might be even a room for distortion, fabrication or falsification.[18] No

16. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973)

17. Edward Hallett Carr touches upon "the cult of facts" in nineteenth-century history writing in his classic *What Is History?: The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered at the University of Cambridge January-March 1961* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961): 5 and the ensuing pages of his first lecture titled "The Historian and His Facts" (3-35). As for other references to the documania of American history writing, see Kraus, *A History of American History* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937): 171-83; Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 19-20, 103-10; Eileen Ka-May Cheng, *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008): 131-32; and Donald R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 292-93.

18. As for the myth of historical objectivity in American history writing, see Peter Novick, *That Nobel Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge

matter how many primary sources were collected, they didn't make any sense, independent of historians' subjective prescriptions. As the twentieth-century pragmatic historians showed, history writing was an interpretive endeavor to reimagine the past from a particular point of view and within a specific frame of reference.[19] Among other recent studies on the objectivity question in American history writing, one of the most fruitful accomplishments is Eileen Ka-May Cheng's *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784-1860*. Cheng points out that early American history writing had been a continual effort to reconcile the two apparently incompatible practices — historical objectivity and authorial originality — or, in other words, "to be original without sacrificing the belief that truth was based on the re-creation of the objective reality of the past."[20] Even if historians stressed the scientific truthfulness of their writings, they were also responsible for plotting a story after their own methods and arts.

With all these studies on the aspects of American history writing, what has been taken for granted and not questioned seriously is the historical or temporal nature of history. In most cases of American historiographical discussion, this premise has never been shaken: history is a narrative that represents a temporal and sequential unfolding of the past events. Among rare instances, Thomas M. Allen addresses the problem of temporality in his cultural analysis of American nationalism, *A Republic in Time: Temporality & Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America*. Even though Allen clearly illustrates that temporal experience constituted a crucial part of American nationalism, however, he does not examine the concept of temporality itself or the process of temporalization that was going on in early

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UP, 1998) and Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, Fraud -- American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (2004; New York: Public Affairs, 2007). Both Novick and Hoffer elaborated on the collective and consensual nature of historical truthfulness. See Novick, *That Nobel Dream*, 52-90 and Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, 19-21.

19. Cushing Strout evaluated pragmatic historians like Carl Becker and Charles Beard in contrast with the late-nineteenth century scientism in American history writing, especially Henry Adams's thermodynamic theory of history. See Strout, *The Pragmatic Revolt in American History: Carl Becker and Charles Beard* (1958; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966).

20. Cheng, *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth*, 104.

national America.[21]

The period from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth was, as Jerome Hamilton Buckley stated, an age of "the triumph of time," when a new sense of historicity or temporality prevailed through all the ranks of society, corresponding with rapid and decisive changes in contemporary intellectual and material culture.[22] In the field of philosophy of history, Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield define this new development of historical consciousness as "the historical revolutions" in the post-Enlightenment era, while some recent literary scholars like James R. Guthrie, Jonathan Levin and Birgit Capelle also elaborate on the way American Renaissance writers and, later on, pragmatist thinkers found everything changeful, mutable and unstable in the midst of the temporal flux and evaluated such a transient reality in its immediate transiency without stabilizing and articulating it into a given set of rational concepts.[23] In considering American history writing especially during the century at issue, therefore, we should take it into account that the period was when the modern dynamic view of history was about to emerge out of earlier mythological and theological systems of stasis. The concept of temporality or historicity had been nothing natural and familiar before then. The point which I would like to make in the present thesis is in brief as follows: from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century, the idea of history itself was being renovated into a modern sense of the word, and America, newly

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21. Thomas M. Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality & Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2008)

22. Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Triumph of Time: A Study of the Victorian Concepts of Time, History, Progress, and Decadence* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966)

23. Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield, *The Discovery of Time* (1965; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977): 101. As for recent literary studies featuring the American sense of temporality in the nineteenth century, see James R. Guthrie, *Above Time: Emerson's and Thoreau's Temporal Revolutions* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001); Jonathan Levin, *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism, & Literary Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); and Birgit Capelle, *Time in American and East Asian Thinking: A Comparative Study of Temporality in American Transcendentalism, Pragmatism, and (Zen) Buddhist Thought* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011). I will revert to the literary discussions on temporality in the conclusion of this thesis, which I will devote mostly to Emerson's philosophy of history.

independent and in urgent need of its own national history, was a place where that renovation produced dramatic effects unimaginable in any other countries. Thus the title of this thesis has double meaning: first, "history in transition" signifies history which stresses transitoriness and mutability with a renewed sense of temporality, and second, it means that history itself was right in the process of redefinition.

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To repeat, the world grew out of a static perspective to a dynamic one with a new sense of temporality or historicity in the course of roughly one hundred years from the late eighteenth century though the late nineteenth. What contemporary people had believed *being* turned out to be *becoming* in the process of perpetual transition. Before examining the effects of this shift in intellectual framework on American history writing, it is important to understand its historical context first — how it happened and why in this specific period. Or more to the point of the present discussion, how did the idea of history fully realize its temporal overtone in Western thought? History was not born history, but historicized in the course of history.

To begin with, the definition of history. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the term, in the contemporary usage, usually signifies a series of past events as well as the written record of them. It is likely to refer to important or "historic" events and figures, but in any case, its overall implication lies in the temporality of human affairs or actions, as is suggested by such phrases in the lexical definition as "in order of time," "formation and growth," and "course of existence or life, career" (history, *n.* 2, 3, and 4b). As I hinted above, however, it was not until as late as the turn of the eighteenth century to the nineteenth that history was fully temporalized into its modern dynamic sense. Etymologically, the term derives way back from the ancient ἱστορία or *historia*, denoting "A systematic account (without reference to time) of a set of natural phenomena, as those connected with a country, some division of nature or group of natural objects, a species of animals or plants, etc" (history, *n.* 5). Now rare as it is, the vestige of the original signification can be found in

"natural history." History used to be a predominantly atemporal and static mode of representation; or to put it the other way round, the world, through the lens of history, looked strangely uneventful, timeless, and universally in order.

History, in its original context, was an idea directly antithetical to that of philosophy, which took care of abstract generality or theory, while the former referred to the descriptive knowledge of particulars. Unlike the Aristotelean interest in universal and common experiences, history then bore on unmediated unique observations with little, if any, implication in temporality, and its effect was to excerpt and fragment human experience into decontextualized facts. This descriptive nature branded history as an inferior way of knowing, a mere purveyor of particular samples for higher philosophical abstraction. Aristotle's famous dichotomy of poetry and history allegedly originated the millenia-long story of the latter's humiliation: "poetry speaks more of universals, history of particulars."[24] Things stood the same well into the seventeenth century, as Galileo downplayed historians as mere "memory experts," in strict contrast with speculative philosophers like himself. As Baconian empiricism got rooted in the Western intellect, history was reevaluated because of its theory-free objectivity, which constituted an essential part of inductive knowledge making, the process of generalization from observed data, independent of purportedly universal, self-evident premises. In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, moreover, the so-called "spirit of system" possessed those descriptive "memory experts," inciting them to seek after their own way of synthetic systematization, independent of the philosopher's power of deductive reasoning. No matter how higher history climbed up the hierarchy of sciences, however, the basic fact remained that it always predicated itself on empirical observations of particulars, and was nothing to disturb the essentially static order of the universe. It represented the thing as it was, and never dreamed of questioning why and how it was. History only began to take notice of the causal and temporal sequence of events toward the end of the eighteenth century.[25]

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24. Aristotle, *Poetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967): 33.

25. As for the descriptive nature of early modern history and its later development into systematic representation, the following anthology of science studies is most illuminating: Gianna

Then here is a question: what happened to history in the late eighteenth century? Or what was responsible for its reformation into a mode of temporal representation? From the viewpoint of epistemological history, Michel Foucault addresses the very question in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966; English translation, 1970). The two centuries leading up to the late eighteenth were, according to Foucault, the age of order, distinguished by its desire for "an exhaustive ordering of the world" on the timeless table.[26] This passion for order was legitimatized by the Enlightened confidence both in the static perfection of the universe and in the all-embracing ability of representation. The mentality of the era envisioned the world as an essentially static and changeless scale, in which everything kept its right place and didn't deviate from it. And the whole domain of empiricity, "at the same time *describable* and *orderable*," could be fully represented on universal explanatory reference grid, arranged by differences and identities of its visible surface features.[27] This was nothing but a natural historical endeavor for all-inclusive taxonomy like the Linnean system of nomenclature, and, as a matter of fact, natural history was one of the three sciences of order that established themselves on the eighteenth-century

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Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi, eds., *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005). Each essay in this book illustrates the descriptiveness of *historia* in a variety of contexts of intellectual pursuits, such as medicine, physics, philology, and of course, natural history; but among others, Pomata and Siraisi's "Introduction" (1-38) and Donald R. Kelley's "Between History and System" (211-37) offer an historical overview of the importance of *historia* in early modern learning and thus serve as a good introduction to the issue as a whole. The part touching upon Galileo in this paragraph is from Kelly's essay noted above. As a purveyor of particular evidence for empirical sciences, *historia* was a major manufacturer of what Mary Poovey calls the "modern fact," a "nugget of experience detached from theory." Poovey's account of the development of the "modern fact" — from just an example of some preset principle to evidence for a new generalization — was very helpful for us to understand the implications of *historia* in modern scientific disciplines. See Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

26. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966; New York: Vintage Books, 1994): 74.

27. Foucault, *The Order of Things,* 158.

Classical *episteme* (the other two were general grammar and science of wealth). Not just natural history, *any* history did not go beyond the confines of the tabulated order. Human history, if there had been anything like that, would have been safely incorporated as a part of timeless natural history. The human species, too, had its right place in the eternal order of being, and was not allowed to quit its post. In the eighteenth-century universe, every good cobbler stuck right to his last.

Although Foucault doesn't mention it, the same point is made in Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (1936). Just like Foucault's, the book is an extraordinary specimen of erudition, but the main thesis is plain as day. Through the Middle Ages to the late eighteenth century, there had been three unit-ideas working as an undercurrent of Western thought, that is, plenitude, continuity, and gradation of the created world. Nature was packed air-tight with no gap, forming an uninterrupted continuum of being, and this order of things was graded hierarchically from top (human beings, of course) to bottom (minerals). Hence the fusion of these unit-ideas into that potent trope, the Great Chain of Being.

> The result was the conception of the plan and structure of the world which, through the Middle Ages and down to the late eighteenth century, many philosophers, most men of science, and indeed, most educated men, were to accept without question, — the conception of the universe as a "Great Chain of Being," composed of an immense, or — by the strict but seldom rigorously applied logic of the principle of continuity — of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents, which barely escape non-existence, through "every possible" grade up to the *ens perfectissimum* — or, in a somewhat more orthodox version, to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite — every one of them differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it by the "least possible" degree

of difference.[28]

God created the universe all sufficient and "good" for itself. The logical assumption was that the universal order of being, perfected at the Creation once and for all, would be immutable as it was and had been. Every new finding in natural history — a hitherto unknown species, for example — didn't disturb it any, but only to be fit into the infinitesimally graduated scale of being and regarded "as a step towards the completion of a systematic structure of which the general plan was known in advance, an additional bit of empirical evidence of the truth of the generally accepted and cherished scheme of things."[29] The concept of the Great Chain of Being was invoked thus "to justify the belief in the rationality, the perfection, the static completeness, the orderliness and coherency of reality."[30] Here again, the world was conceived as eternal, static, and immutable, and this attested to the self-contained perfection of the Creator.

No matter how strong the intellectual predilection for timelessness and stasis was, however, the world was obviously so eventful, marked with unmistakable signs of diversity and temporal transformation, too. Mutability was the basic fact of every mortal life. In the final analysis, the trope of the Chain of Being was a product of "the general habit of thinking in terms of species."[31] A species, not an individual, was the unit of the universe, and even if a single individual underwent any sort of transmutation or simply passed away, a species, as a collective entity, could remain as it was (although we now know even a species could be extinct). "A species is 'a whole independent of number, independent of time; a whole always living, always the same; a whole which was counted as one among the works of the creation, and therefore constitutes a single unit in the creation.'"[32] On the other hand, an individual is finite, changing, transient. What the late eighteenth century witnessed and the nineteenth

28. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936): 59.

29. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being,* 232.

30. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being,* 288.

31. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 231.

32. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 230.

century confirmed was the decline of species-thinking and the corresponding rise of individuals-thinking. The individuals, having been hidden behind the thick shadow of species, then finally came to the fore, and from their local and finite perspective, the world turned out always changing in the dynamic process of temporality. Now the Great Chain of Being was not a mere inventory of invariable types. It instead was conceived "as the program of nature, which is being carried out gradually and exceedingly slowly in the cosmic history."[33] Of course, "history" in this context signified a train of events unfolded in the course of time. At long last, it switched its focus from the world of *being* to that of *becoming*.

Where Lovejoy uses "individual," Foucault chooses the word like "subjectivity," "interiority," or "psychology," and his discussion follows the same story of the temporalization of the universe through the renewed interest in finite and mutable individual lives. Like Lovejoy's "individual," Foucault's "subjectivity" and "interiority" referred to what had been buried in depth, beyond the reach of representation. The Classical programme of universal tabulation represented such a static flat world, but beneath the serene surface of which, the late eighteenth century discovered, something elusive, uncanny, but vital lay unnoticed. Utterly unrepresented on the surface level, "The obscure but stubborn spirit... and the endless effort of life" nonetheless proved powerfully vibrating as a hidden cause for the outer being.[34] The development of Georges Cuvier's comparative anatomy was one of the symbolic examples of the contemporary attention to the interiority, the urge to explore for a cause in depth. Once the new causal dimension was installed on the great taxonomic table, man was now emancipated into the process of causal sequence called life. Order was thus replaced with history as a new paradigm of knowledge.

> Just as the Order in Classical thought was not the visible harmony of things, or their observed arrangement, regularity, or symmetry, but the particular space of their being, that which, prior to all effective knowledge, established them in the field of

33. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 244.

34. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 209.

> knowledge, so History, from the nineteenth century, defines the birthplace of the empirical, that from which, prior to all established chronology, it derives its own being.… History, as we know, is certainly the most erudite, the most aware, the most conscious, and possibly the most cluttered area of our memory; but it is equally the depths from which all beings emerge into their precarious, glittering existence. Since it is the mode of being of all that is given us in experience, History has become the unavoidable element in our thought.[35]

Both Lovejoy and Foucault set the origin of human historicity in the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century when the discovery of the individual lives conduced to the temporalization of the static worldview in the Classical *episteme*. That was the great age of the individual, whose power was felt keenly in a series of liberal revolutions in both sides of the Atlantic, and moreover, nineteenth-century Romanticism would soon unleash its individualist potentiality aesthetically as well as intellectually. Indeed, the eighteenth-century Enlightenment produced its own version of history, *i.e.,* the stadial model, also known as the four-stage theory, of human civilization; but its interest lay in setting a universal (and conjectural) template of socioeconomic development. It did not describe a causal chain of historical changes, but subsume them under the formulaic pattern of human progress which allegedly goes through the stages of hunting, pasturage, farming, and commerce. Again, the turn of the century witnessed another example of the shift from the universal order to the localized individual — this time, from all-inclusive universal history to an array of different national histories of different internal affairs.[36] The contemporary rise

35. Foucault, *The Order of Things,* 219.

36. As for the turn-of-the-century shift in emphasis from universal history to national history, see Stefan Berger, *The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): 28-140. In its introduction, Berger touches upon the "saddle period" around the turn of the nineteenth century, a period of "a major transformation of the way in which people thought about time and history," although he does not explain why and how it transformed specifically during that period. See Berger, *The Past as History*, 5. The Enlightenment's four-stage theory of history did not fully register the historical causation of, say, a commercial society

of the individual had so far-reaching repercussions on Western society at large as to affect and reform the epistemological framework of the time. Foucault and Lovejoy illustrates it persuasively.

And yet, it feels as if there is something still left untold. A hint lies dormant in Foucault's wording, in which the newly discovered dimension of individuality and temporality is imagined as that of "buried depth."[37] The power of the individual is conceived as a drive from the deep, "a subjectivity, a consciousness, a singular effort of cognition … the 'psychological' individual who from the depth of his own history, or on the basis of the tradition handed on to him, is trying to know."[38] And temporality, too, turns out to be time in depth: "Thus, European culture is inventing for itself a depth in which what matters is no longer identities, distinctive characters, permanent tables with all their possible paths and routes, but great hidden forces developed on the basis of their primitive and inaccessible nucleus, origin, causality, and history."[39] While the tabulated order is a form of knowledge horizontally deployed, historicity, Foucault points out, realizes its function of causal sequence "in the vertical plane."[40] What is implied but not quite articulated here is geological deep time.[41] Surprisingly enough, Foucault doesn't make any direct mention of geology in his book — and Lovejoy doesn't either, as surprisingly — in spite of these

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evolved out of a farming one. In most cases, a commercial society is not a natural corollary to a farming one; a society grows commercial when an already commercialized society marks it as a potential market. As for the four-stage "conjectural" theory of history, I am indebted to Kelley, *Fortunes of History*, 81-111.

37. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 229.

38. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 240.

39. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 251.

40. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 230.

41. "Deep time" is the phrase first coined by John McPhee's geological travelogue in *Basin and Range*, and that refers to the modern concept of uniformitarian earth history. Recently, Wai Chee Dimock uses this metaphor in a radically new way to remodel American literary history in the global setting. See McPhee, *Basin and Range* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980): 108, for instance; and Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

frequent intimations (Cuvier, one single important agent for the modern, historicized paradigm of knowledge in Foucault's argument, was a paleontologist and stratigrapher).[42] The ellipsis is even mysterious, considering that the period in question was coterminous with the era when geology came into being as a historical science.

No doubt, geology was another most important factor for the contemporary realization of temporality and historicity. Roy Porter's exposition of the development of geology best supplements Foucault's and Lovejoy's arguments at where they both are curiously tacit. Earth science, as is shown in Porter's *The Making of Geology: Earth Science in Britain 1660-1815* (1977), traced exactly the same route of gradual temporalization as the Classical table or the Great Chain of Being did. Originally, the interest in the earth was confined to the natural historical study of particular stones and rocks, or mineralogy as it was then called. Each mineral object was picked out for analysis and thus decontextualized out of its formation, that is, out of time. Stones had their reasons of being only when snugly tabulated into their own compartments of the mineralogist's cabinet. As the eighteenth century rolled on, however, more and more fieldwork findings revealed multiple changes in the state of the earth, challenging the divine simultaneity of the universe (the Creation at one time). Contemporary practitioners of earth science then grew to agree that the earth had not eternally been in its present condition. "Human evidence told of change. In any case, present processes, however slight, were modifying the Earth, however slowly. Hence no theory sought to 'explain' the Earth by trying to prove that it had always existed in its current state. The problem, in other words, was to explain change."[43] And change presupposed temporality.

The new recognition of changes in the earth's crust diminished the evidential value of the displaced mineral objects, and put corresponding emphasis upon rocks *in situ*, or rather

42. Cuvier's study of extinct animals and earth formations was grounded on his geological fieldwork of the Paris basin. As for Cuvier' contributions to geology, see Rachel Laudan, *From Mineralogy to Geology: The Foundations of a Science, 1650-1830* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), especially Chapter 7 "Historical Geology," 138-79.

43. Roy Porter, *The Making of Geology: Earth Science in Britain 1660-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977): 71.

strata and their successive formation in time. The layers of stratified rock masses betrayed "a significant history — being formed at different times, from different materials, under different forces, and that strata could be vestiges of history."[44] To be sure, a sect of theorists explained them away as evidence of the power of miraculous catastrophes like the Deluge and thereby imposed the biblically-correct short time-scale on the earth's history (it was only six thousand years or so since God created the world, or they thought so).[45] The catastrophist view was increasingly dismissed, however. The wide diversity of strata could not be the products of a couple of supernatural revolutions during a relatively short period, but took quite a lengthy time-scale to be baked up by the natural power that had worked slowly and uniformly just as it did now and most likely would. This uniformitarian story totally transformed the long-cherished model of the timeless universe into a truly dynamic process of becoming, in which temporality occupied the central place.[46] Everything was found changing at any moment, and the world was never exempted from the modifying power of cruel historicity.[47]

By the early nineteenth century, many traditional (*i.e.*, natural historical, descriptive and atemporal) earth sciences had been reformed into geology, "The newly dynamic study of

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44. Porter, *The Making of Geology*, 121-22.

45. According to Archbishop James Ussher, the Creation began on October 23, 4004 BC. This means that the earth was about 5800 years old in the late eighteenth century. See Stephen Jay Gould, "Fall in the House of Ussher," in *Eight Little Piggies: Reflections in Natural History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993): 181-193.

46. Both "uniformitarianism" and "catastrophism" were first coined by William Whewell, a British philosopher and historian of science, in his review of Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, volume 2. See Whewell, "Lyell's Geology, Vol. 2 — Changes in the Organic World now in Progress," *The Quarterly Review* 47 (March & July 1832): 103-

47. Kenneth L. Taylor also pointed out the development of geology from a natural historical descriptive endeavor to a historical science. See Taylor, "Geology in 1776: Some Notes on the Character of an Incipient Science," in Cecil J. Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America: Proceedings of the New Hampshire Bicentennial Conference on the History of Geology* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1979): 75-90.

landforms [which] linked together Earth's past and present, surface and structure."[48] To name a couple of epochal works that most contributed to this generic reconstruction, James Hutton introduced the uniformitarian framework with the publication of *Theory of the Earth* (1788 and enlarged in 1795), and a generation later, Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830–33) reconfirmed the importance of historical dynamics for geological thinking. Although geology was (and is) a recondite pursuit of knowledge, its popularity in the nineteenth century should not be underestimated. In nineteenth-century England, for example, there mushroomed a number of gentlemen's societies, agricultural and industrial societies, and all of these institutions, as well as scientific societies and museums, diffused the knowledge and methods of geological sciences, because the interest in the earth had had much to do with practical activities, like mining, surveying and land-drainage. Along with the increase of popular scientific lecturing, moreover, the upswing in scientific publications furthered the popularization of geology.[49]

Popular digests, compendia and textbooks flooded contemporary society with geological topics. By the end of the eighteenth century, approximately five hundred works on geology had been published in the newly independent United States, and fifty years later, the number doubled with the growing speed of the publication rate, so published information of geological phenomena was pretty widely diffused in mid-century American society.[50] To boot, even works of fine art featured geologists and geological curiosities, and this testified to the geology's appeal to many different levels of society and the strong interest in the subject on the artists' part as well.[51]

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48. Porter, *The Making of Geology*, 183.

49. As for the nineteenth-century popularization of geology, see Porter, *The Making of Geology*, 94-103.

50. As for the publications on geology in the nineteenth century, see Robert M. Hazen and Margaret H. Hazen, "Neglected Geological Literature: An Introduction to a Bibliography of American-Published Geology, 1669 to 1850 (Abstract)," in Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America*, 33-36.

51. Ralph Waldo Emerson referred favorably to the development of geology in his journals (see "Conclusion" of the present thesis). An Emerson's contemporary, Herman Melville also featured a

The social impact of geology was that wide and strong. Presumably, geological imagination, if not literacy, gripped the Western mind pretty firmly by the early nineteenth century. The historicizing influence of geology was not limited to the small membership of the scientific community, but pervaded every aspect of the whole intellectual life of the day.

> The gradual making of geology is, however, of significance in its own right, as an index and integral part of important currents changing European society and ideas. A vision of man, Nature and society which had been fundamentally degenerative, static, or at most cyclical during the Middle Ages and in early modern times was yielding to one which was dynamic, progressive, developmental and finally evolutionary. Geology was the product, the beneficiary of these shifts. But it was also the basis of them. Long before it was accepted that life, or man, had a fully extended history, or that the meaning of life and man were to be grasped through their development, the history of the Earth had been revealed and absorbed. The antiquity, history and development of the Earth underpinned the nineteenth-century

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great geological curiosity, the Balanced Rock, in *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (1852), and a utilitarian geologist named Margoth in *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (1876). As for other literary references to geology, see Dennis R. Dean, "The Influence of Geology on American Literature and Thought," in Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America*, 289-303.

Thomas Cole's series of historical landscapes, *The Course of Empire* (1833-36) is well-known for its geological leitmotif, an erratic boulder placed in the upper center of each painting. As for the influence of geology on Cole's works, see Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875* (1980; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially Chapter 4 "The Geological Timetable: Rock," 41-70; Thomas M. Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality & Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008): 173-83; Rebecca Bedell, *The Anatomy of Nature: Geology & American Landscape Painting, 1825-1875* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially Chapter 1 "Thomas Cole and the Fashionable Science," 17-45; and Ellwood C. Parry III, "Acts of God, Acts of Man: Geological Ideas and the Imaginary Landscaped of Thomas Cole," in Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America*, 53-71.

temporalization of the science of its inhabitants.[52]

Geology was one crucial precondition for the full temporalization of the Western world. Through geology, again, "history" shed off its former descriptive and static connotation, and assumed its present significance of dynamic becoming.

Time, as well as space, had been an essential component of human life, so every sensible being must have had a certain sense of time since the earliest antiquity of human history. As we have seen so far, however, that sense of time was different from the reformed temporality after the late eighteenth century. Before then, time had been bracketed out to somewhere beyond the bounds of inquiry, so as not to affect the stable order of the universe. The Enlightenment ideas of progress and perfectibility of the human race obviously stressed temporality, but the whole intellectual climate was in favor of order, and strenuously militating against the fulfillment of historicity. Perfectibility was nothing but an item on the preordained agenda, and progress was a sort of mock-evolutionism because it stood for "nothing more than the interdependent and general displacement of the whole scale" and kept intact the relation between different species.[53] The disrupting power of temporality had long been contained in the universal order. The latent Romantic impulsion wanted yet more energy to break through the Classical rule.

The temporalization of the world and its history was effected by the rise of the individual and the discovery of geological deep time in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. And both the catalysts for modern historical consciousness had a lot to do with the constitution of American society and culture. The practice of American history writing most successfully contributed to the combination of individualism, geology, and modern historicity. For, not just one of the first modern nation-states brought forth by a liberal revolution, America was the country where "Of all the sciences, geology seems to be the one most closely associated with the United States — a land of mountains and rivers, of

52. Porter, *The Making of Geology*, 221.

53. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 151.

glaciers and prairies, atolls, hot springs, badlands, mines, and gushers."[54] Geology was a great national myth for nineteenth-century America, one critic says. "It offered Americans a past at once more recent and more remote: the wilderness, ever new in its virginity, also stretched back into primordial time. That past was crucial in establishing an American sense of identity."[55] What kind of historical consciousness and even what kind of national identity did geology, as well as individualism, help establish in contemporary America? — this is the one most important question I elaborate on in the present thesis.

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The following discussion is composed of three parts. The first two parts discuss the general frameworks of early American history writing: scientific empiricism and historical objectivity for one, and natural history for the other. These attributes more or less characterize American historical texts from the late eighteenth century well into the nineteenth, like those volumes written by Jeremy Belknap, Jared Sparks, Emma Willard, and Henry Adams, which I am going to explore respectively in the first and second parts. The third and final part, in turn, sticks to another nineteenth-century historian, Francis Parkman. Parkman's is an epitome and culmination of the early developments of American history writing, so the aforementioned theoretical frameworks are all in effect in his writings. His historical texts thus corroborate the methodological analyses in the preceding chapters, or, to put it the other way around, Part One and Part Two furnish the necessary frames of reference to better examine Parkman's histories in Part Three. His history writing is a quintessential combination of scientific objectivity, the physical reality of the continent, and the renewed sense of historicity.

By way of closing this rather protracted introduction, let me summarize the main points of the discussion that follows.

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54. Cecil J. Schneer, "Introduction" to *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America*, 5.

55. Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875* (1980; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007): 43-44.

Part One focuses on the most basic part of modern history writing: documentary facts. The nineteenth century saw the rise of history as an empirical science represented most notably by Leopold von Ranke and his empirical theory of source criticism. History established itself in decided contrast with the mythological, biblical, and hence fabricated preconceptions which had dominated the pre-nineteenth-century understanding of human events. What mattered then was the solid factuality of documentary evidence. The historian's confidence in empirical facts was so high, the main task of history was to accumulate as many documentary facts as possible, and this completely independent of any *a priori* assumptions. The so-called "cult of facts" taught the historian only to take care of amassing raw documentary data and, for the rest of the job, let those facts speak themselves. The more facts, the better, and the less theoretical speculation, the even better. The motto was found in the freely quoted phrase of Ranke's: "how it essentially was (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*)."[56]

This ideal of historical objectivity, though doomed to be thoroughly revised or even abandoned by the twentieth-century progressive and pragmatic historians, ruled over European historical scholarship throughout the nineteenth century, and its influence never slackened in the contemporary counterpart in the United States. American historians in the nineteenth century "shared with their continental colleagues a conviction that their histories ought to be founded on an exhaustive exploration of archival sources, which alone could reveal motives and causes in the historical process."[57] Actually, hard empiricist positivism turned out a hallmark of nineteenth-century American history writing. A complete collection of historical documents could be expected only in the United States, because the entire duration of its nationhood fell within the comprehensible and attainable scope of historical record, while the past of other European and Asian countries receded far back into the mythological dark ages. America, one reviewer claimed, possessed all the materials "necessary not only to correct the [historical] errors… but to place its history upon an

56. Leopold von Ranke, "Preface to the First Edition of *Histories of the Latin and Germanic Peoples*," reprinted in *The Theory and Practice of History* (London: Routledge, 2011): 86.

57. Kelley, *Fortunes of History*, 292.

immovable basis, and to make it, what all history ought to be, a record of facts, beyond cavil or doubt — a simple relation of what actually occurred, clothed in the plain and noble garb of truth."[58] As historical evidence was admittedly within their reach, American historians had every reason and motive to collect, compile, and use documentary facts.

Not surprisingly, the passion for empirical evidence produced a whole lot of documentary histories, *i.e.*, published collections of historical documents. In Chapter One, the focus will be upon the Massachusetts Historical Society, the first archival institution in the United States, and its flagship series of documentary histories, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1792 to the present). When Jeremy Belknap, a pastor-historian and author of *The History of New-Hampshire* (3 vols., 1784-92), first conceived the idea of the Massachusetts Historical Society, his purpose was "to collect, preserve and communicate, materials for a complete history of this country, and accounts of all valuable efforts of human ingenuity and industry, from the beginning of its settlement."[59] The point was not just to collect and preserve, but to *communicate* or share historical sources in a published form, and this, Belknap insisted, could be possible by the establishment of a network system, or "*a Republic of Letters*," to exchange historical documents freely among individual historians and archival organizations.[60]

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58. Francis Markoe, Jr., "Documentary History of the American Revolution," *American Quarterly Review* 18 (September 1835): 82-83.

This advantage of American history — the past attainable because of its shortness — was referred to by other nineteenth-century historians. Edward Everett wrote, for example, "the United States of America, in general, and the several States that compose the Union, enjoy an advantage possessed by no people of the ancient world; that their entire political duration fell within the period of authentic history." And the same point was made in a memorial of the Massachusetts Historical Society: "our country will boast what so few others can, hat its history, from the earliest discovery, and feeblest settlement, is equally free from the uncertainty of tradition, and the degradation of fable." See these quoted in Markoe, "Documentary History of the American Revolution," 101, 102.

59. Jeremy Belknap, "Circular letter, of the Historical Society" (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1791).

60. Belknap to Hazard, February 4, 1780, *Collections*, 5th series, vol. 2: 255. See also Belknap to Hazard, March 1, 1791, *Collections*, 5th series, vol. 3: 245.

Of course, the lump sum of documentary facts for itself was not a completed history. Ebenezer Hazard, one of the earliest documentary historians and a longtime confidant of Belknap's, admitted that it only secured historical sources for the reference of later generations of historians and thus "to lay Foundation of a good History."[61] The scientific objectivity of modern history writing demanded exhaustive archival researches, but such efforts would amount only to a database of documentary facts, unless there was some sort of theoretical and interpretive frame of reference to unify them into one narrative whole. After Belknap and Hazard followed a long line of hard-core documentary histories throughout the nineteenth century, which were all forbiddingly bulky multi-volume series of document compilations that everybody recognized as products of tremendous devotion and yet few would take trouble to go through. In Chapters Two and Three, then, my discussion will center around a couple of aborted cases of scientific objectivity in history writing: Jared Sparks, the first professor of history at Harvard College (1839-49, and then the College president, 1849-53), who struggled with and never really managed the conflict between the strict objectivism of documentary history and the overall generalization of historical narrative; and Henry Adams, who took nineteenth-century scientific history to the very limit with his thermodynamic theory of history, although his scientific reductionism turned a target for criticism soon in the twentieth century. In both cases, the principle of scientific objectivity went well beyond guaranteeing impartiality, and it even brought impersonality into their historical accounts.

What wanted in documentary history was a narrative context, without which discrete details would remain discrete, not unified in a meaningful way. In Part Two of the present thesis, I will examine two typical cases of American historians' searching for a master narrative for history. Chapter Four, which is complementary to Chapter One, deals with Jeremy Belknap's methods of history writing in his *The History of New-Hampshire* and *The Foresters* (1792). As a Congregational pastor, his native frame of reference should have been

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61. Ebenezer Hazard, *Historical Collections: Consisting of State Papers, and Other Authentic Documents, Intended as Materials for an History of the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Printed by T. Dobson for the Author, 1792): iii-iv.

that of Puritan ancestry, whose typological worldview warranted every single event that did and would transpire in America as an antitype of its corresponding Biblical archetype. From this perspective, human history should have been always already prophesied in the sacred history of Christianity. As it was, however, Belknap, a man of enlightened rationality, strenuously set himself apart from what he sarcastically called "Our gravest historians" — the Mathers and William Hubbard, among others — and their visionary records of "many omens, predictions, and other alarming circumstances."[62] For him, what constituted history was not the prescriptions of the providential calendar, but individual events and episodes in the secular world. Hence his passion for historical details and particularities, which led him to the foundation of the above-mentioned Americana archive, and in Chapter Four, I will consider his obsessive collection of historical evidence, especially in terms of its implications with the eighteenth-century natural history's practice of exhaustive cataloging of nature. The argument will revert once again to the difficulty of giving a narrative unity to accumulated historical data and revitalizing them in a temporal order, and this time the issue will present itself as the problem of the individual, or to be exact, how to preserve the individuality of each historical fact in the general flow of a historical narrative. From Belknap's point of view, the concern about the individual was not confined to history writing, but it rather loomed large over contemporary society, as a nationwide argument on federalism and individual freedom. A stalwart federalist himself, he understood his history writing as a literary from of the federalist nation-building, in that both tried to manage the uniqueness and typicalness of individual components in the overall systematization. The federal theory of national consolidation even provided a fit example for his writings, and worked as a narrative framework for history, especially in his historical allegory, *The Foresters*.

Another structural framework for early American history writing was geography. The main focus of Chapter Five will be on the combination of geography and history in nineteenth-century America. Since the earliest days of national existence, America had been a spatial entity more than anything else, and its history predominantly a story of geographic

62. Jeremy Belknap, *The History of New-Hampshire,* vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author by Robert Aitken, 1784): 162.

and territorial development in the newly found continent. Then it was only natural that geography played a significant part in American history, and actually they were not just inseparable but even interchangeable with each other, as was illustrated by the works of Jedidiah Morse, Samuel G. Goodrich, Justin Winsor and other practitioners of what I call American geographico-history. Chapter Five features one of such geographico-historians, Emma Willard, an eminent educator-historian in the mid-nineteenth century. The scope of Willard's history embraced a variety of topics ranging from history of the United States to universal history, and ancient history to modern history, but in any case, geographical concerns were always essential to her history writing. Her interest in geography produced a series of unique fusions of history and cartographic images, such as "progressive maps," "the Historic Tree," "Picture of Nations," and "the Temple of Time." Although the impact of her geographico-history fell far short of that of the twentieth-century counterpart, say, Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier theory, yet it certainly represented a natural corollary of what the tradition of American geographico-history had been heading for, *viz*. the visualization and spatialization of history.

Spatiality was one of the most important ideas that constituted Francis Parkman's history writing. The last three chapters of this thesis will explore the geographic, cartographic and geological nature of Parkman's writings from respective angles. Parkman's reputation certainly rests on his seven-volume series of American colonial history, *France and England in North America* (1865-92), and yet it also must be remembered that his literary career actually started with a travel writing, *The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky-Mountain Life* (1849). The central question in Chapter Six is how the style of travel writing contributed to his history writing. I propose to reconsider his first historical account, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada* (1851), particularly in juxtaposition with *The Oregon Trail*; and then the former text will be found internalizing the methods of travel writing and other so-called "literature of place," such as geography, ethnology, and other natural historical writings.

Of course, the rest of Parkman's books also were informed by a geographic and cartographic makeup, so Chapter Seven in turn will discuss the spatial nature of his

historical writings as a whole, especially in their panoramic and paratactic import. What I mean by "panoramic" here is of a visual desire for spatial systematization and abstraction. Parkman's history was regularly punctuated with panoramic depictions of historical scenes, such as a grand scenery of the Illinois basin as seen from the ramparts of Fort St. Louis in *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West* (1869; revised in 1879), and an expansive bird's-eye-view tableau of the Northeastern and Canadian battle fields in *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884), to name just a few. In these instances, his viewpoint was invariably set on a high platform, commanding a wholesale prospect spread like a map. On the other hand, the paratactic style, which equally characterized his texts, was just the reverse: it stressed individual particularities, cramming fine details into each historical episode and slowing down the narrative impetus. His history writing featured the frequent switchover between panoramic abstraction and paratactic detail, and both of which worked together to flatten out the linear (before-and-after) course of history on an open (side-by-side) plane. Chapter Seven explores the effect of this double perspective of panorama and parataxis on Parkman's idea of history or historicity. While spatial concerns molded other cases of geographico-history in a timeless and atemporal cast, the dual vision introduced an immensely long and slow sense of temporality to his writings.

The slowness and apparent inertia of Parkman's history, or his version of history of *longue durée* was best epitomized in his employment of geological deep time. He firmly believed that American history was always engaged with American geography, but the physical realities of the continent in his view were not the static order fixed on the visible surface. He instead imagined the dimension of depth underneath the ground level of the present, so that the past was found buried deep in layers. Chapter Eight will highlight the effect of the geological imagination on the composition of Parkman's "history in depth," and illustrate how the development of modern earth sciences had directed the nineteenth-century historical consciousness in general. And also, I will devote a part of the concluding chapter to the same discussion on geology and history, and this time with respect to Ralph Waldo Emerson's philosophy of history, which, again, was deeply inspired by Charles Lyell's uniformitarian geology.

To come right to the point, geology affected the nineteenth-century sense of temporality in two ways. First, the time scale expanded way far beyond the authorized Christian chronology, while geology discovered the earth's crust had been changing under the influence of uniform mechanical agencies throughout the indefinitely vast duration of time; and second, this immense stretch of time was recognized in the image of layered strata, or to use John McPhee's cogent term, "deep time."[63] The renewed manner of time perception naturally brought forth a new type of historical narrative, which emphasized the remoteness of the past, but at the same time ensured it to be somehow accessible within reach, or one might say, just under anyone's feet. As Emerson put it, the past was buried hidden but actually "so close" and "indicating its presence by slight but sure signs" seen through the surface.[64] This geological vision of the past — remote but accessible — was what Parkman employed in his historical narratives. Since his boyhood, he had been familiar enough with the subjects of earth sciences to write on the geological conception of the earth's history in an early unpublished essay, "Studies of Nature" (1839) and even publish a geological poem, "The New-Hampshire Ranger," in *The Knickerbocker, or New-York Monthly Magazine* (August 1845). After setting his mind firmly on history writing, he still conceived time as something accumulated one pile after another, and addressed himself to uncovering the layered relationship between the past in depth and the present on the surface. His research trip, for one, was an attempt to excavate the long forgotten memory of a historical site and lay it open side by side with the present-day locality.

Parkman's geological rendering of historicity did not fully register the true dynamics of historical changes, but it certainly represented a general inclination of contemporary history writing toward temporalization and secularization. The time-honored framework of sacred history gradually outdated, American historians of the day turned to individual particularities and facts as possible evidence for a new generalization, and tried different theoretical frameworks (natural history, the federalist policy, geography, cartography, and

63. See note 25.

64. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Lecture on the Times," reprinted in *Essays & Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983): 169.

geology) for potential contexts of their histories. Those were the days before the evolutionary theory prevailed as a next master framework throughout the general public. The early national and the antebellum eras, in other words, were a period of historiographical interregnum, or a gap between the reigns of typology and evolutionism, when a variety of systematic articulations were tested for their narrative potency. History writing then was on its transitional phase, shifting from religious to scientific standards, deductive to inductive reasonings, and static to dynamic worldviews. What follows here are stories of diverse efforts to organize a historical narrative, independent of any preset methodological guidelines. The results were never definitive, but all the more for their tentativeness, they offered interesting cases to reconsider the nature of history writing. This thesis addresses to the way each model of history was proposed and what kind of problem it suggested to history writing itself.

Part I

Collecting and Systematizing Historical Materials

Chapter One

"*A Republic of Letters*": Organizing Historical Knowledge in Early National America

I. No Document, No History

During the later years of their correspondence, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson occasionally exchanged their ideas of history. In his letter to Jefferson, dated July 30, 1815, Adams started a discussion with these questions: "Who shall write the history of American revolution? Who can write it? Who will ever be able to write it?"[1] All the debates and deliberations in the Continental Congress, Adams remembered, were behind conclave doors, and no one present bothered to put them down on record. All the inside stories alleged to be lost, how could one legitimately reconstruct the beginnings of the American revolution? Jefferson, in reply to Adams's query, was simply negative about the possibility.

> On the subject of the history of the American revolution, you ask Who shall write it? Who can write it? And who ever will be able to write it? Nobody; except merely it's external facts. All it's councils, designs and discussions, having been conducted by Congress with closed doors, and no member, as far as I know, having even made notes of them, these, which are the life and soul of history must be forever unknown. (Jefferson to Adams, August 10[-11], 1815)[2]

Although the discussion between the former Presidents of the United States continued a bit more, this single round of epistolary exchange is enough to reveal several major issues of early national American history writing, which went on to challenge later historians well into the late nineteenth century. First of all, both Adams and Jefferson assumed a rigid distinction between the inside and the outside of the doors of the Continental Congress. For Jefferson especially, what was going on within was "the life and soul of history," while

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1. Lester J. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987): 451.

2. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, 452.

things without were mere "external facts," not essential to a true knowledge of the revolutionary history. Considering that the revolutionary war had already receded back into the past at the time of the correspondence, moreover, the inside/outside distinction turned out to be of temporal overtone as well as of spatial one. It was, in other words, a generational gap between the firsthand witnesses (insiders) and the younger historians (outsiders). This then bounces back to Adams's first questions, which should be translated into a more specific one: who was most eligible to narrate the history of the American revolution, the first-generation participants or the second-generation commemorators? The Founding Fathers and revolutionary heroes would stress their exclusive knowledge of the event, but Adams and Jefferson admitted its records were lost or had never been kept at all in the first place. The younger generation of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, were eager to know about the foundation of their country, while their filiopietistic curiosity was repeatedly disappointed by the unbridgeable chasm of time past.[3] Perhaps Jefferson was right; nobody could present the whole story without any distortion or flaw. But even then, this one thing was for sure: the task of historiographical enterprise inevitably fell upon the later generations — the generations forever being displaced from the scenes of history.

Despite Jefferson's disapproval, there was no other recourse for the younger historians of the nineteenth century but to scratch together as many historical documents as possible. What follows here is a story of the collection and preservation of historical documents in early national America. For the historians of the day, what was at stake was how good documents could be accumulated and how well they would be preserved for later use. Compared with the immediate experience of historical events, those records might look only subsidiary, to be sure; but as even those "external facts" were daily damaged and lost either due to accidents or gross negligence, so saving the endangered documents was foremost among other historian's projects. Hence the rapid proliferation of historical societies from

3. Herman Melville once dramatized the filiopietistic dilemma of the second-generation revolutionary in *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (1852). See also Myra Jehlen's discussion on *Pierre*, "The Rebirth of Tragedy," in Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986): 185-226.

the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth. It began tentatively with the foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1791 and the New-York Historical Society in 1804, while the number grew steadily with ten societies organized between 1820 and 1830, and twelve more during the next decade, and by 1860, one hundred eleven archival institutions dotted all over the country.[4] With these facilities, the historians did not just stash away hard-earned documents in the vaults, but rather created the system of communal preservation, which was termed after Enlightenment phraseology "the Republic of Letters." The focus in this chapter is then upon the contemporary efforts to preserve historical documents chiefly by publishing and sharing their duplicate copies among the historians. Innovative in itself, this archival network system went well with both the liberal and republic climates of the newly independent country. The distribution of documentary accounts of national history consolidated the otherwise dysfunctional states into a unified whole, and at the same time, an abundance of information motivated a variety of interpretations of those documents, which in turn produced a wide range of individual historical narratives and historiographical styles as well.

II. Collection, Preservation and Publication

When it comes to collecting historical materials, what matters first is the scope of collection. On receiving the above-cited reply from Jefferson, Adams addressed himself to yet another series of questions: When did the revolution start and end, and where? Was everything important really confined to the Congressional room? And "What do We mean by the Revolution?" Adams then challenged the essentialist definition of the revolution and stretched it into a more liberal meaning.

> As to the history of the Revolution, my Ideas may be peculiar, perhaps singular.

4. David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America 1607-1884* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960): 100. See also Eileen Ka-May Cheng, *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784-1860* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 2008): 29.

> What do We mean by the Revolution? The War? That was no part of the Revolution. It was only an Effect and Consequence of it. The Revolution was in the Minds of the People, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen Years before a drop of blood was drawn at Lexington. The Records of thirteen Legislatures, the Pamp[h]lets, Newspapers in all the Colonies ought [to] be consulted, during that Period, to ascertain the Steps by which the public Opinion was enlightened and informed concerning the Authority of Parliament over the Colonies. (Adams to Jefferson, August 25, 1815)[5]

History was being made in everyday lives of ordinary people as well as in a circle of a select few. Adams intimated the history of the American revolution was not just about great men's elated oratories, but that it rather covered the whole range of popular experiences leading up to the military engagements. Then every single document, however trifle it looked, was worth collecting. Still later on, Adams gave another thought to the issue, and this time the revolutionary history traced back to the earliest period of colonial settlement: "In my Opinion it [the revolution] began as early as the first Plantation of the Country. Independence of Church and Parliament was a fixed Principle of our Predecessors in 1620 as it was of Sam. Adams and Chris. Gadsden in 1776" (Adams to Jefferson, May 29, 1818).[6] The province of historians now proved quite broad in time and space, and they were encouraged to hunt for materials anywhere, catch as catch can. It was their responsibility to build up a collection of historical documents, *Americana*.

Although Jefferson didn't make any comment upon Adams's idea of popular history, he must have recognized the urgency of the need for such a documentary collection. After all, Thomas Jefferson the great Enlightenment polymath was quite an avid collector for himself, and Americana, among other volumes of arts and sciences, constituted a core part of his then

5. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, 455.

6. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, 525.

largest personal library in the United States.[7] He boasted of it in his letter to Samuel H. Smith on September 21, 1814, "You know my collection, its condition and extent. I have been fifty years making it, and have spared no pains, opportunity or expense, to make it what it is. While residing in Paris, I devoted every afternoon I was disengaged, for a summer or two, in examining all the principal bookstores, turning over every book with my own hand, and putting by everything which related to America, and indeed whatever was rare and valuable in every science[8]" The vast collection legitimated him to give virtuosic advice to young scholars, what to collect and what to read. In fact, his letters were punctuated with a list of recommended books to them, which enough evidenced his erudition and bibliophilic passion for documents.[9]

Quite impressive as his collection was, however, Jefferson knew its physical precariousness. His library had suffered serious losses twice, once by fire in 1770 and next by a British raid on Richmond in 1780. Other depositories were not exempted from similar difficulties, either. His letter to Samuel H. Smith, which I have just quoted in the last paragraph, was actually to offer to redeem the recently vandalized Library of Congress with a part of his collection. (In July 1814, the British troops had looted the Capitol and set fire on books in the Library. Reviewing the catalogue he sent to Smith, the Congress decided on the purchase, nearly 6,700 volumes valued at as modest as $23,950. The two thirds of the collection were again destroyed by fire on December 24, 1851.) Wherever they were stored, papers were all liable to fire, corrosion, or other natural and artificial causes of damage.[10]

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7. As for Jefferson's great library, see Kevin J. Hayes, *The Road to Monticello: The Life and Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), especially, 546-80.

8. Thomas Jefferson, *The Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010): 351.

9. See Jefferson, *The Selected Writings*, 207-209, 210, 228-30, 317; and Thomas Jefferson, *Writings: Autobiography; A Summary View of the Rights of British America; Notes on the State of Virginia; Public Papers; Address, Messages, and Replies; Miscellany; Letters* (New York: Library of America, 1984): 816-17, 905-6.

10. Many other collections were destroyed or dispersed during the late colonial and revolutionary era. The Harvard college library was largely destroyed by fire on January 24, 1764 (quickly recovered,

After the loss of his precious manuscripts and books, then, Jefferson came up with a whole new measure to hedge against bibliographic destruction: that is, preservation by multiplication.

> All the care I can take of them [Jefferson's collection of printed laws] will not preserve them from the worm, from the natural decay of the papers, from the accidents of fire, or those of removal, when it is necessary for any public purposes, as in the case of those now sent you. Our experience has proved to us that a single copy, or a few, deposited in MS. in the public offices, cannot be relied on for any great length of time. The ravages of fire and of ferocious enemies have had but too much part in producing the very loss we now deplore. How many of the precious works of audacity were lost, while they existed only in manuscript? Has there ever been one lost since the art of printing has rendered it practicable to multiply and disperse copies? This leads us then to the only means of preserving those remains of our laws now under consideration, that is, a multiplication of printed copies. (Jefferson to George Wythe, January 16, 1796)[11]

Print was yet to be developed in Jefferson's time, its impact on the mode of information

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it grew rapidly accumulating over 12,000 volumes by 1790, while Yale had only 2,300 in 1796.) Lieutenant Governor John Usher's papers were lost through inattention, and Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's collection of historical sources was ravaged by a mob of patriots in 1765. The Boston Court House documents was lost by fire in 1747, and the Court of Common Pleas documents were destroyed by the evacuating British forces in 1776. Thomas Prince's papers were dispersed through inattention and destroyed by the British forces during the Revolution. As for the details of each episode, see Leonard Tucker, *Clio's Consort: Jeremy Belknap and the Foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1990) and Belknap, "Introductory Address from the Historical Society to the Public," *American Apollo*, January 6, 1792. The whole address is reprinted in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 1 (1792): 2-4.

11. Jefferson, *Writings*, 1032.

diffusion not fully realized.[12] Nonetheless, Jefferson thought the secure preservation of documents depended on the publication and distribution of multiple copies among the public at large. Given the safety net of print dissemination, at least a copy or two most probably might survive somewhere, even if the original was lost. Forget about the aura of the original, but all that counted then was its informational content, which could be duly duplicated in its copy.

Here is another example. In the early 1770's, Ebenezer Hazard, a New York bookseller and later Postmaster General of the Confederation (1782-89), started preparing a collection of colonial records and papers for publication. Although the number of subscriptions proved way less than satisfactory, the project found supporters in congressional delegates like Adams and Jefferson, who all readily acknowledged its utility for the sake of document preservation, and the Continental Congress gave its formal approval to the plan in 1778.[13] Jefferson expected much from Hazard's project, as he referred to it in the state-paper section of, or rather in the closing remark of, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785): "An extensive collection of this descriptions has been for some time in a course of preparation by a gentleman fully equal to the task, and from whom, therefore, we may hope ere long to receive it. In the mean time accept this as the result of my labours, and as closing the tedious detail which you have so undesignedly drawn upon yourself."[14]

Obviously, Jefferson recognized Hazard's enterprise as of the same conception as his

12. As for the growth of print culture in America from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth, see Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

13. As for Hazard's state-paper collection, see Walter Muir Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies: An Enquiry into Their Research and Publication Functions and Their Financial Future* (Boston: The Boston Athenæum; distributed by Harvard University Press, 1962): 4; Kevin J. Hayes, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Early American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 580-81.

14. Jefferson, *Writings*, 304. According to an editorial note in the University of North Carolina Press edition of *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the list of public papers that follows this passage was originally prepared by Jefferson as a reply to Hazard's circular letter dated August 23, 1774, which requested important state papers for the purpose of publication. See Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982): 296 (n8).

own, so he was especially pleased to know that Hazard's book was finally going to be made public after the long delay.

> I learn with great satisfaction that you are about committing to the press the valuable historical and State papers you have been so long collecting. Time and accident are committing daily havoc on the originals deposited in our public offices. The late war has done the work of centuries in this business. The last cannot be recovered, but let us save what remains; not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident. (Jefferson to Ebenezer Hazard, February 18, 1791)[15]

The first volume of Hazard's series, titled *Historical Collections: Consisting of State Papers, and Other Authentic Documents*, was published in 1792 and the second one, in 1794. Originally conceived as a five-volume set, the project was aborted after the publication of the second for lack of fund. Still, it fairly, if not fully, performed its intended mission: "But although the public Mind was anxious for information, it could not be easily obtained. The Histories which had appeared, relating to a few individual States only, were not sufficient to gratify the inquisitive, and were, in general, written so long since, as not now to prove satisfactory; and Materials for furnishing a more comprehensive View of the Subject were dispersed, and not within the Reach of many. To remove this obstruction from the Path of Science, and, at the same Time, to lay Foundation of a good History, is the Object of the following Compilation."[16] The documents collected in Hazard's volumes were distributed and shared among the public, and thus have been secured for the reference of generations of historians since then.

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15. Jefferson, *Writings*, 973.

16. Ebenezer Hazard, *Historical Collections: Consisting of State Papers, and Other Authentic Documents, Intended as Materials for an History of the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Printed by T. Dobson for the Author, 1792): iii-iv.

The preservation of historical documents followed the three steps. First, they had to be collected and stored in some depositories, private or public. Then they were complied and issued in printed form, and finally, the duplicate documents diffused and circulated among the public at large. And the main agents in all these endeavors numbered as many: historians, including antiquarians and bibliophiles; printing technology, for the publication of multiple copies; and the circulation network for the traffic of those copies. The last one provided historians with the system of knowledge distribution, also known as "the Republic of Letters."

III. The Republic of Letters, or a Network of Historiographical Fraternity

Hazard was not the only one who collected and distributed historical documents in print. On the contrary, the practice, documentary history as it was called, was rather familiar in the early days of American history writing. The Reverend Thomas Prince (1687-1758) of the Old South Church, Boston, for example, was known for his ardent passion for document hunting. Primary sources were the sum and substance of his historical pursuit, and his Americana library stood out among other contemporary collections both in quality and quantity, so he deserved to be named "an American pioneer in scientific historical writing,"[17] His *Chronological History of New-England, in the Form of Annals* (1736-55) was a thoroughly documented text with an exhaustive collection of historical materials. With characteristic thoroughness, he began the chronology with the sixth day of Creation (the birth of Adam), but clogged with over-plenitude of documents, his project didn't go beyond the early decades of the seventeenth century. After the publication of the first volume, he prepared for the second one, some portions of which were issued in subsequent years, but the whole project stopped far short of completion for want of public interest. In retrospect, it is a blessed relief that the published copies of his collection have survived to this day, while most of the original documents were dispersed in the revolutionary turmoil.[18]

17. Michael Kraus, *The Writing of American History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953): 49.

18. The remains of Prince's "New England Library" are now deposited in the Boston Public Library. As for the catalogue of Prince's collection, see *A Catalogue of the Collection of Books and*

As for other major documentary histories, let us take a brief survey just to make sure how the genre prevailed even after Prince and Hazard. Jared Sparks, the first professor of history at Harvard College (1839-49, and then the College president, 1849-53) was another dogged document hunter, creating a pretty extensive database of historical sources for his days. It was through his strenuous research that the papers relating to George Washington's early campaigns were excavated and brought back from the Office of the Board of Trade and Plantations in London.[19] His chief achievements were the compilations of *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, (12 vols., 1829-30), *The Life and Writings of George Washington* (12 vols., 1834-37), and *The Works of Benjamin Franklin* (10 vols., 1836-40). A long line of documentary histories then followed throughout the nineteenth century: Peter Force's *American Archives* (9 vols., 1837-53), Justin Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America* (8 vols., 1884-89) and Henry Harrisse's *Discovery of North America* (1892), to name only a few. Winsor's and Harrisse's books pretended to be a "narrative" or a story of "Discovery of North America," but they were all collections of a huge amount of historical documents concerning America. These endeavors looked rather obsessive even to the point of being labeled "the cult of facts."[20] "New England people, especially those of Massachusetts and Connecticut," one contemporary reviewer said, "have always been a documentary people," and he even went on to proclaim, "Let us gather every fragment of its history; let us allow nothing to be lost."[21]

Manuscripts Which Formerly Belonged to the Rev. Thomas Prince, and Was by him Bequeathed to the Old South Church, and Is Now Deposited in the Public Library of the City of Boston (Boston : Alfred Mudge & Son, 1870).

19. As for Sparks's research in London and other European cities, see Herbert B. Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks: Comprising Selections from His Journals and Correspondence*, vol. 2, (1893; Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1970): 51-131.

20. E. H Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961): 5. See also Michael Kraus, *A History of American History* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937): 171-83.

21. "Documentary History of the Revolution," *North American Review* 46 (April 1838): 476, 487. As for still other examples of publications of historical collections, see Michael Kraus, *A History of American History* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937): 175-78.

Along with the individual efforts of documentary history, a number of archival institutions, which cropped up from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth, all embarked on the publication project of historical sources. The Massachusetts Historical Society stood out among others, as the first institution of this kind ever in the United Sates and a chief provider of historical documents in print since its foundation in 1791. It was a brainchild of the pastor-historian Jeremy Belknap, author of *The History of New-Hampshire* (3 vols., 1784-92) and disciple of the above-mentioned historian Thomas Prince.[22] Belknap's vision was all of a piece with other document collectors', as he wrote to one of his fellow historians, Ebenezer Hazard, "I am sensible that the only sure way to preserve manuscripts is to multiply the copies."[23]

In August 1790, Belknap issued a proposal of the Historical Society, "Plan of an Antiquarian Society," in which he laid out his design of the institution, especially by repeating the word "communicate" over and over. "A society to be formed," he declared, "consisting of not more than seven at first, for the purpose of collecting, preserving, and communicating the Antiquities of America."[24] Now archaic as the usage is, the word "communicate" here signifies "to share, share in, partake of; to use, or enjoy, in common

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As for the nineteenth-century booming of historical writings, see William Charvat, *Literary Publishing in America 1790-1850* (1959; Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993) and Buell, *New England Literary Culture*, 23-55, 193-260.

22. Prince baptized the young Belknap, and later became his intellectual, as well as spiritual, mentor.

23. Belknap to Hazard, November 16, 1788, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 3: 75. Belknap met Hazard around 1788, and their historical fraternity lasted until the former's death in 1798. Their correspondence was published in two volumes, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th series, vols. 2 and 3 (1877). Among other biographers of Belknap, Russell M. Lawson puts strong emphasis on the relationship between the two historians. See Lawson, *The American Plutarch: Jeremy Belknap and the Historian's Dialogue with the Past* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998).

24. Jeremy Belknap, "Plan of an Antiquarian Society" (1790), reprinted in Jane B. Marcou, *Life of Jeremy Belknap, D.D., the Historian of New Hampshire: Selections from His Correspondence and Other Writings* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1847): 185. Jane B. Marcou is a grand-daughter of Belknap.

with" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, communicate *v.* 4).

> Each member, on his admission, shall engage to use his utmost endeavors to collect and *communicate* to the society, manuscripts, printed books and pamphlets, historical facts, biographical anecdotes, observations in natural history, specimens of natural and artificial curiosities, and any other matters which may elucidate the natural and political history of America, from the earliest times to the present day, and —
>
> All *communications* which are thought worthy of being preserved shall be entered at large in the books of the society, with an index, and the originals kept on file.
>
> Letters shall be written to gentlemen in each of the United States, requesting them to form similar societies; and a correspondence shall be kept up between them for the purpose of *communicating* discoveries to each other. (Italics mine)[25]

The Society was intended primarily to "communicate," that is, to share copies of historical sources among its members. And while "the originals [were] kept on file," important findings would be printed in book form, and thus communicated with other similar societies, which in turn were encouraged to send back their publications "made on paper, and in pages of the same size, that they may be bound together."[26] The network of communication was assumed in double concentric circles, the small one composed of local members, and the large one of other historians throughout the country.

When Belknap set out founding the Massachusetts Historical Society, what he had in mind was not an isolated endeavor of a single institution, but a nationwide network of historical archives to preserve otherwise scattered Americana. Although succeeding historical societies were destined to be "bastions of localism," they shared a nationalistic desire to collect everything American.[27] Belknap's idea of archival network was conceived

25. Belknap, "Plan of an Antiquarian Society," in Marcou's *Life of Jeremy Belknap*, 185-86.

26. Belknap, "Plan of an Antiquarian Society," in Marcou's *Life of Jeremy Belknap*, 186.

27. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 100, and see also pp. 62, 65, and 101.

evidently after the representative model of the federal republic. As early as 1780, he advanced an incipient idea of the federal arrangement of literary enterprises in his letter to Hazard: "Why may not *a Republic of Letters* be realized in America as well as a Republican Government? Why may there not be a Congress of Philosophers as well as of Statesmen? And why may there not be subordinate philosophical bodies connected with a principal one, as well as separate legislatures, acting in concert by a common assembly? I am so far an enthusiast in the cause of America as to wish she may shine Mistress of the Sciences, as well as the Asylum of Liberty."[28] In August 1789, Belknap met John Pintard, a mastermind of the New-York Historical Society (founded later in 1804), and that interview served as a direct trigger for him to organize a historical society.[29] In retrospect, it seems almost fated that the interview was held in the same year as the national government under the new Constitution started operations, and actually, Belknap's conception of archival republic was philosophically as well as chronologically contiguous to the federalist framework (and politically, too, he was a stalwart New England federalist, as was shown especially in his private letters to Hazard and 1785 *Election Sermon*). The Massachusetts Historical Society set as a central office of the archival network system, Belknap, its first corresponding secretary, was most intent on expanding and sustaining his "*Republic of Letters*," steadily communicating with the corresponding members he recruited from all over the country.[30]

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28. Belknap to Hazard, February 4, 1780, *Collections*, 5th series, vol. 2: 255. See also Belknap to Hazard, March 1, 1791, *Collections*, 5th series, vol. 3: 245.

29. As for the connection between Belknap and Pintard, see Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 76-87 and George B. Kirsch, *Jermy Belknap: A Biography* (New York: Arno Press, 1982): 134.

30. The original configuration of the Society's officers is:

President	James Sullivan
Corresponding Secretary	Jeremy Belknap
Recording Secretary	Thomas Wallcut
Librarian and Cabinet Keeper	John Eliot
Treasurer	William Tudor
Annual Committee	Peter Thatcher, James Winthrop, and George Richard Minot

Through this network of historiographical fraternity, a horde of archival resources were amassed into the Society *and* shared by all those interested in American history. According to recent discussions on Western intellectual history since the Renaissance, the scholarly Republic of Letters had long been operated through epistolary correspondence, the exchange of letters in the literal sense.[31] Letters then were a chief purveyor of knowledge, and as such, they had a definite public import, so even when addressed to a specific person, they were often circulated and shared among the public at large.[32] Belknap's archival network also was maintained with a circulation of letters. While pressing the corresponding members for contributions, Belknap dispatched a "Circular Letter" among people of different localities both to announce the establishment of the Society and solicit information the Society needed for its library. The Society's design was, he again professed in it, "to collect, preserve and communicate, materials for a complete history of this country, and accounts of all valuable efforts of human ingenuity and industry, from the beginning of its settlement" and for that purpose, he drew up a long list of "Articles on which the Society

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The corresponding members include Ebenezer Hazard (the first one to be nominated, of course), St. George Tucker of Virginia, Christoph Daniel Ebeling of Hamburg, Germany, John Jay, David Ramsay, Noah Webster, Ezra Stiles, to name a few.

31. As for recent discussions on Western institutions of knowledge-making, see, for example, Ian F. McNeely and Lisa Wolverton, *Reinventing Knowledge: From Alexandria to the Internet* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008); Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); and Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

According to McNeely and Wolverton, the Western civilization had featured the multiplication and distribution of written scholarship (portable books), while the Eastern counterpart made the most of the durability and fixedness of writings (knowledge chiseled in a heavy slab). See McNeely and Wolverton, *Reinventing Knowledge*, 23-30, 119-59.

32. Richard D. Brown pointed out that letters had been a sort of public property, shared among society at large through the colonial period to the early national era. As printing gained ascendency as a diffuser of knowledge, however, letters grew more devoted to private affairs and personal concerns. See Brown, *Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), especially Chapter 1, 16-41 and Chapter 9, 218-44.

request information" (fourteen in number, plus one post script), and asked the general public to send what they had and knew to the Society.[33] Once accumulated through this mass correspondence, then, raw historical materials were put to print after due collation and selection, and thereby distributed back to interested historians and society at large.

The Society published its collection in the supplement section of a new weekly periodical, *American Apollo*, and the published pages of historical documents were a year later bound in book form, which marked the beginning of the series of *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1792 to the present).[34] In the introductory address attached to the first installment for *American Apollo*, January 6, 1792, Belknap repeated his cherished idea of document preservation/multiplication, which was all the same story again, but worth

33. See Belknap, "Circular letter, of the Historical Society," (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1791). In his own writing project, too, Belknap employed the same circular-letter method to collect his materials, as he explained in the preface to the third volume of *The History of New-Hampshire*: "a printed circular letter was addressed to the several Clergymen, and other gentlemen of public character, in all parts of the State, requesting their communications on various heads of inquiry" (*NH*, III: iii). As for the circular letter for *The History of New-Hampshire*, see Belknap, "The Subscriber, Being Engaged in Continuing the HISTORY of NEW HAMPSHIRE," (Boston, 1790). For further discussions on Belknap's method in *The History of New-Hampshire,* see Chapter Four of the present thesis.

Belknap probably learned the circular-letter method from his mentor, Thomas Prince, who applied the same strategy to collect documents for his *Chronological History of New-England* (See Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 33, 104-5). The epistolary style of natural history also must have informed his method, and viewed from this perspective, his entire historiographical endeavors proved almost identical with contemporary natural history, especially in its passion for details and epistolary method of data collection. The relationships between natural history and historical document collection is one of the chief topics of Chapter Four. As for how exhaustive Belknap's primary source hunting was, see also Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 45-58; Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 115-46; and Lawson, *The American Plutarch*, 21-29, 127-35.

34. The printer of *American Apollo* was Joseph Belknap, the eldest son of Jeremy. The weekly newspaper was launched in January 1792, with a singular success at the outset, though the popularity soon declined. According to Joseph the printer, it was because the public interest lied in a "regular history of America," not in "a random assortment of documents" (Tucker, *Clio's Consort,* 127). The periodical was discontinued in December 1794.

quoting for one last time because it concisely expressed the very essence of the Society's enterprise.

> There is no sure way of preserving historical records and materials, but by *multiplying the copies*. The art of printing affords a mode of preservation more effectual than Corinthian brass or Egyptian marble; for statues and pyramids which have long survived the wreck of time, are unable to tell the names of their sculptors, or the date of their foundations.
>
> Impressed with this idea, the members of the HISTORICAL SOCIETY have determined, not only collect, but to *diffuse* the various species of historical information, which are within their reach. As these materials may come in at different times, and there may not be opportunity to digest them in the best order, previously to their publication; they will present them in such order, as may be convenient; and will arrange them, by an index, at the end of the year. They cannot promise to erect a regular building; but they will plant a forest, into which every inquirer may enter at his pleasure, and find something suitable to his purpose.[35]

The metaphor in the closing sentences is telling. The Republic of Letters, in Belknap's idea, had no regular building, let alone a gate or a fence to restrict admission. It was instead a wooded common, awaiting any who would enter and providing available resources for a proposed literary edifice, just as the American forest actually had done for the construction of settlements since the colonial era.[36] In this sylvan "Invisible College," document resources

35. Belknap, "Introductory Address from the Historical Society to the Public," *American Apollo*, January 6, 1792. The whole address is reprinted in *Collections*, vol. 1 (1792): 3-4.

36. As for the significance of lumber resources for American society from the colonial era through the mid-nineteenth century, Brooke Hindle, ed., *America's Wooden Age: Aspects of Its Early Technology* (Tarrytown: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1975).

Just around the same time, Belknap wrote also a historical allegory of the American Revolution, *The Foresters* (1792; revised and enlarged in 1796). The story was set in a forest (America) and featured a series of struggles among the settlers there. His idea of republican nationhood, as well

freely circulated among the students, and they were thus shared and preserved in a communal way.[37]

Still, the development of the historiographical network didn't proceed under promising auspices alone, but it had its own difficulties. For one thing, just like its political counterpart, Belknap's literary republic was frustrated and eventually thwarted by the conflict of interest between localism and nationalism. "The Bay State example was followed in many states, but Jeremy Belknap's proposal was not realized; each new organization narrowed the bounds and challenged the dominance of the older society."[38] Moreover, the cooperative system, if realized at all, posed a challenge, especially in its style of presenting accumulated data. History, or documentary history in particular, now turned out a practice of collective efforts of many, yet another attempt at *e pluribus unum*. A century after the age of Belknap and Hazard, the librarian-historian Justin Winsor recapitulated the idea of collaboration in history at the very founding convention of such a collaborative body, American Historical Association, on September 9, 1884. "Scholars and students," Winsor asserted, "can no longer afford to live isolated. They must come together to derive that zest which arises from personal acquaintance, to submit idiosyncrasies to the contact of their fellows, and they come form the convocation healthier and more circumspect."[39] It sounds all too fine, but what exactly came out of those collective efforts at documentary history then? Forbiddingly bulky multi-volume series of document compilations, which everybody recognized as products of tremendous devotion and yet nobody would take trouble to go through. Winsor

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as of the literary republic, was conceived in its close relationship with the American forest. I will further discuss the implications of Belknap's history writing with American nature in Chapter Four.

37. The "Invisible College" was a name given for a scholarly association which would later develop into the Royal Society. The Royal Society was a typical Republic of Letters, which promoted the international circulation of knowledge through epistolary correspondence and print transfer. As for the idea of invisible college in modern academia, see Diana Crane, *Invisible Colleges: Diffusion of Knowledge in Scientific Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

38. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 62.

39. *Papers of the American Historical Association*, vol. 1, no. 1 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1885): 11.

was a documentary historian himself, and as I touched upon it above, his eight-volume *Narrative and Critical History of America* was too broad to manage and too unspecific to follow. It held true for Belknap's project of document multiplication; the first four *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1792-95), for the publication of which he was responsible, were a random assortment of historical and natural historical documents. "A veritable potpourri of history and natural science, the contents of the early *Collections* suggests that Belknap's enthusiasm for history sometimes ran riot over his editorial discretion."[40] After all, documentary historians staked most on document hunting and compilation, and couldn't afford to give unity to their findings. Perhaps, the business of coherency was more than they could bear, or simply that was not their concern.

All that said, documentary history, with the establishment of historian's fraternity, took up its own mission in the progress of American history writing. The American Republic of Letters in the early national era ensured the multiplications of document copies and facilitated easier access to them. It was the responsibility of later historians to utilize an abundance of accumulated documents and process them into definite stories. Considering the works of mid- to late-nineteenth-century historians, such as William H. Prescott, Francis Parkman, and Henry Adams, the task was duly performed, resulting in a variety of historical interpretations.

IV. Many Documents, Many Histories

In the Republic of Letters, knowledge was freely distributed and shared by all, and the early national era witnessed the gradual implementation of this network system in America, chiefly through the development of print culture, or so-called "culture of the copy." While the scope of the literary network was coterminous with that of transportation and postal service, its density depended upon the multiplication of written texts. Here again, Thomas Jefferson deserves our attention. Just like other contemporary intellectuals, Jefferson had been such an active letter writer all through his life, and not just sending a letter, he was also fascinated with the invention of copying it. At first, he used James Watt's copying press

40. Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 140.

(devised in 1779 and patented in 1780) to make a duplicate of his own letter, and later on, it was replaced with the polygraph, also known as pantograph or double-writer (patented in 1803). He was especially fond of the polygraph, so he recommended it time and again to his correspondents: "A Mr. Hawkins of Frankford, near Philadelphia, has invented a machine which he calls a polygraph, and which carries two, three, or four pens. That of two pens, with which I am now writing, is best; and is so perfect that I have laid aside the copying-press, for a twelve month past, and write always with the polygraph" (Jefferson to Constantin-François de Chassebœuf, Comte de Volney, February 8, 1805).[41] The copying press, too, was an attractive device in itself. George Washington owned two, Benjamin Franklin, three, and Jefferson installed the machines in the federal government offices shortly after becoming the first U. S. Secretary of State.[42] Hence a steady flow of duplicate document copies was about to be facilitated in early-nineteenth-century America. The ideal of the Republic of Letters was a likely possibility, and as the century rolled on, printing finally gave it a crucial push forward to the universal diffusion of copies.[43]

The overall deployment of print media was one of the principal requisites for bringing the nation-state into being. As Benedict Anderson put it, the diffusion of printed matter (newspaper, among others) propelled the creation of "national print-language," which in turn laid the bases for national consciousness. Sharing the same print culture and its language and reading the same newspaper every morning, people, who lived scattered over

41. Thomas Jefferson, *Writings: Autobiography; A Summary View of the Rights of British America; Notes on the State of Virginia; Public Papers; Address, Messages, and Replies; Miscellany; Letters* (New York: Library of America, 1984): 1157.

Jefferson once wrote to Charles Willson Peale, an American patent holder of the device, "I could not, now therefore, live without the Polygraph." Lillian B. Miller, ed., *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, vol. 2, pt. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988): 1169. As for Jefferson's lifelong passion for copying, see Silvio A. Bedini, *Thomas Jefferson and His Copying Machines* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984).

42. Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York: Zone Books, 1996): 222-23.

43. As for the development of print and its impact on the information diffusion pattern, see Brown, *Knowledge Is Power*, 218-96.

a wide terrain and would never see each other in their lives, gradually nurtured a stretched sense of community; "these fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community."[44]

This was the case with the United Sates, to be sure, where print certainly grew to play a crucial part in consolidating the otherwise dysfunctional states together in the course of the early national era. And yet, the general distribution of printed texts in America didn't bring about a flat, uniform, homogeneous nation-state as Anderson predicted, but it rather ensured and reinforced the diversity of individual ideas, opinions, and choices among the people.[45] While the print media network threw them in the midst of a plethora of printed copies, it was all up to individual subjects how to read and understand them. And, again, it was all up to individual historians how to interpret their sources, which were communal property shared among their fraternal network, but would possibly yield a wide variety of stories. Their task was, in other words, to recreate or reimagine history over and over.[46]

Although they had much in common, the historians featured in the chapters that follow were never to be conformed to a single method, nor to a single narrative style. Their ideas of history were all scientific (rational and inductive) and natural historical (catalogic, geographic, or, by extension, geological) one way or another, but they varied widely in document interpretation and so did their end products. With source materials steadily growing in number, their concern was about how to process them from a definite

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44. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* revised edition (London: Verso, 2006): 44.

45. Richard D. Brown touched on the relationship between mass communication and the diversity of personal preferences in his conclusion to *Knowledge Is Power*, 268-96.

46. Of course, it is *our* task, too. We live in the age of Google Books or the hyper-diffusion of information. Nothing is more likely than the full digitization of every book in the quite near future, and we are going to gain access to an incredible amount of documents with equally incredible facility. Perhaps, it would be like the Borgesian library made ready for online search. No matter how daunting it looks, it is our responsibility to weave one story after another out of such an indiscriminate miscellany of documents.

perspective and integrate them into a specific historical account. The following discussions assess such individual attempts in early American history writing. The historians certainly were native to the contemporary cultural and intellectual climates, but their writings were as different as they could be.

Chapter Two

The Biographer's (Sub-)Voice: Historical Objectivity and Interpretive Imagination in Jared Sparks's Documentary History

I. Erudition *or* Narrative

Life is short, the art of history writing long. Professor Jared Sparks must have thought so as he lay dying on March 14, 1866, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Throughout his literary career, he had been renowned for his diligence and thoroughness in historical source studies. As one of his fellow historians remembered, "Imagination and fancy were not characteristics of his mind. He was methodical and indefatigable in every work he had immediately in hand."[1] Of an ideal researcher type as he was, however, there was a major flaw in his historiographical enterprise: he had never finished a single proposed historical narrative in his life. When it came to documentary compilations, journal essays, or biographical sketches of historic figures, his achievements were literally second to none. When it came to writing a historical narrative in its entirety, his pen suddenly faltered. For all his trouble in "methodical and indefatigable" research, he could not put discrete materials together into an overall generalization. Strange to say, he was a historian unable to write a history.

From the perspective of American history writing, the early nineteenth century was a period of the great unveiling of hitherto unavailable historical documents. The semi-centennial in 1826 offered a right occasion for the people to get interested in their nation's beginnings again. As we have seen in the last chapter, the document hunting campaign started locally with the founding of local historical societies, but it soon stimulated "national efforts to collect, publish, and distribute government documents," and even grew into an international undertaking, when historians found that their much needed sources were

1. The words of R. M. Hodges of Cambridge, Sparks's classmate, reprinted in William Reed Deane, *In Memoriam Jared Sparks, LL.D., Obit., March 14, 1866* (Boston?: n.p., 1866): 22. Dean also wrote "Memoir of Jared Sparks, LL. D," *Historical Magazine* 10. 5 (May 1866): 146-56.

stashed in England, France, and Spain, and "In 1826, the raid upon foreign archives began."[2] Sparks was one of the chief instruments who were responsible for reclaiming Americana documents back from European archives, and by virtue of his and other document hunters' efforts, source materials rushed in to nineteenth-century America.

No history writing would be possible without primary sources, to be sure, but nineteenth-century historians faced yet another problem with a growing amount and variety of historical evidence ready at hand: how to order a plethora of documents into a meaningful narrative whole. This was where Sparks stumbled, while he was much acclaimed as a collector and editor of historical sources. To the purpose of the present thesis, his success and failure deserve due attention because they suggest the two crucial concerns of early national American historiography: encyclopedic erudition and narrative unity. These two factors affected contemporary history writing in such different guises as authenticity and readability, scientific objectivity and editorial interpretation, empirical factuality and theoretical generalization, and meticulous documentation and textual elegancy. In no matter which form, they were always found in conflict, not quite reconciled even if historians tried hard to incorporate them in their writings.

In this chapter, my interest centers on Sparks's abortive efforts of history writing, or especially his (mis-)handling of primary sources, with a view to elucidate the twin issues of historical objectivity and interpretive subjectivity in contemporary history writing as a whole. A number of critics have discussed the nineteenth-century imperatives of objectivity and factuality in history writing. The nineteenth century was, as Peter Novick and others point out, the age of scientific objectivity in historical disciplines. Historical facts should be independent of interpretation, historical truth should be empirically verifiable, and the inductive logic of scientific history, if systematically pursued, "might ultimately produce a comprehensive, 'definitive' history."[3] And yet, that was the age of Romanticism, too.

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2. David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America 1607-1884* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960): 103, 104, and also 107 for "the unending pilgrimage of American scholars to British museums, libraries, and universities."

3. Peter Novick, *That Nobel Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*

Romantic historians, as they were called, regarded history as a work of art, an expression of their own poetic imagination of the past. The dilemma was, therefore, "how to allow a role for imagination without abandoning their belief that truth entailed the recreation of the objective reality of the past."[4]

Although Sparks was not a Romantic historian (or on the contrary, he was an advocate of the hard empiricist school of scientific history),[5] his documentary history exhibited the same conflict between erudition and narrative, or historical objectivity and subjective imagination. My focus lies in Sparks's claim on disinterestedness and his vain attempt to remove everything interpretive and imaginative from the field of historical studies. Historical objectivity did not emerge as a natural matter of course, but it had to be carefully protected with constant vigilance against subjective interpretations and imaginations, which otherwise would mar the general truth claim of scientific history. Still, no matter how strictly the historian stuck to manuscript sources, he could not wipe out his own individual perspective completely, as long as he held his cognitive system for himself. His own voice or "I" found its way, if covertly and suppressedly, into the text (or its margin), and the ideal of historical objectivity was thus frustrated by its own impossibility. Through the examination of Sparks's history writing, then, we can reassess the problem of nineteenth-century historical objectivity in its inner conflict and complexity, and this is the main purpose of the discussion

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 37.

As for the nineteenth-century ideal of historical objectivity, see also Donald R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 26-55, 173-97, specifically; and Cushing Strout, *The Pragmatic Revolt in American History: Carl Becker and Charles Beard* (1958; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966).

4. Eileen Ka-May Cheng, *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008): 67.

5. I once discussed Sparks's history writing, especially in term of his documania. I won't make a survey of his projects in this paper. As for the details of his history writing in general, see Yoshinari Yamaguchi, "The Agony of Professor Sparks: A Study of Historiographical Enterprises in Early Nineteenth-Century America," Hiroko Washizu and Takeshi Morita, eds., *In Context: Epistemological Frameworks and Literary Texts* (Tsukuba: Research Society of Literature and Epistemological Frameworks, 2003): 285-305 [*Written in Japanese].

that follows.

II. Document Hunter and Blocked Historian

Jared Sparks seems to be almost completely erased from our academic memory. Perhaps, Franklinians and Washingtonians might remember him as a collector and compiler of Benjamin Franklin papers and George Washington papers. Or perhaps, ardent readers of Simon Schama would recognize the name as a side character in *Dead Certainties: Unwarranted Speculations* (1991). Anyway, it is most unlikely that Sparks's writings in general now invite critical reconsideration, let alone reevaluation. Under the circumstances, we can hardly figure out what Herman Melville meant when he referred to "the volumes of Sparks" in the dedication page of his historical novel, *Israel Potter* (1855). The first question is, then, who is Jared Sparks? Let us start with a quick biographical sketch of the historian, and we will see what a prominent position he used to hold in the early nineteenth-century literary and academic community.

Jared Sparks was born in Willington, Connecticut on May 10, 1789, "ten days only after the establishment of the Federal Government," to the history of which he would later devote a significant portion of his life.[6] His boyhood was not so favored with a good educational environment, alternating between a long period of miscellaneous menial errands and a short winter schooling, but he improved what little chance he had to study by himself, and soon displayed his fondness and ability especially in mathematics and astronomy. Working as a schoolmaster at a town school in Tolland at the age of eighteen, he started to learn the classics, and while at Phillips Exeter Academy in 1809-11, he continued on with the mathematical and classical studies, in both of which he had been well versed when he entered Harvard College in 1811. His interest in history grew materialized after graduation as he was involved in editing the celebrated *North American Review* in 1817-18, and after an interval of four years serving as a Unitarian minister in Baltimore, he came back to Boston to resume the editorship, and this time even ownership of the journal (1824-30). Around this period, his literary career began in full, and he published books and essays at an

6. Deane, *In Memoriam Jared Sparks*, 4.

extraordinary speed and volume. In 1839, he was appointed the first McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History at Harvard, and later went on to succeed Edward Everett as president of the college in 1849 (in office until 1853).[7]

Sparks ruled the contemporary literary community as a working editor of *North American Review*. According to John Spencer Bassett, "Under Sparks the *North American* became the arbiter of the fate of a new book in New England. A larger part of the public, and the most cultivated part, waited to see what this critic said. If its judgment was favorable, the book was well launched."[8] As a historian, too, he was ranked among the most prestigious ones, such as George Bancroft, Francis Parkman and William H. Prescott. (Actually, Bancroft was a friend of his, Parkman his student at Harvard, and Prescott one of the contributors to his *North American Review* and other books.) His appointment to the professorship of modern history at Harvard "mark[ed] the dawn of a new era in American scholarship. It was not only the first recognition of historical science by an American college as worthy of a distinct professional chair, but, in view of the well-known pursuits of the appointee, it was also the first academic encouragement of American history, and of original historical research in the American field."[9] In the "Contents" of Thomas Powell's *The Living Authors of America* (1850), his name was placed last on the list of preeminent writers: James Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Parker Willis, Edgar Allan Poe, Henry

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7. As for biographical information on Sparks, I consulted Herbert B. Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks: Comprising Selections from His Journals and Correspondence* 2 vols. (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1893); John Spencer Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1917): 57-137; Brantz Mayer, *Memoir of Jared Sparks, LL.D.* (Baltimore: Printed for the Maryland Historical Society by John Murphy, 1867); William B. Trask, *Jared Sparks, LL.D.* (Boston?: D. Clapp & Son, Printers?,1866); and Deane, *In Memoriam Jared Sparks.*

In 1819, Sparks took an offer of ministry from Baltimore, and became a Unitarian pastor, declining a professorship at Bowdoin College. He stayed there as a active pastor for four years. By 1823, however, he seemed to lose most of his ministerial interest. Then he came back to Boston, and took editorship of *North American Review* again, and now owned that journal for himself (1823-30).

8. Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians*, 66-67

9. Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, II: 369.

Wadsworth Longfellow… and Jared Sparks.[10] It ought not to have been an example of bathos, but he had every reason to occupy that spot.

In retrospect, Sparks's reputation depended chiefly on his achievements in document hunting and biography writing. As for the latter, we will have a chance to discuss later in this chapter, so let us here examine his primary preoccupation, the collection of historical documents. Admittedly, the nineteenth century was an era of "romantic history" in America when Bancroft, Prescott, Parkman and John L. Motley highlighted narrative coherence, faith in human progress, and literary elegancy in their writings.[11] Still, there was a different but equally important practice of history writing, even geographically and culturally close to the school of romantic history. While the writings of romantic historians were literary or poetic artifacts, Sparks's was a scientific, encyclopedic, and objectivistic endeavor, with the late eighteenth-century Republic of Letters as its predecessor and soon to be followed by the tenet of scientific history in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Among other projects, Sparks was best known for his editing of *The Writings of George Washington; Being His Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official and Private, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts: With a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations* (12 vols., 1834-37). He had first conceived the idea of the compilation during his pastorship in Baltimore, as he got acquainted with Chief Justice John Marshall (biographer of George Washington) and Judge Bushrod Washington (custodian of Washington Papers at Mount Vernon).[12] Back in Boston, he began to examine the revolutionary papers in the public offices of the original thirteen states, which he went all through by 1826. After securing the Mount Vernon manuscripts at his disposal next year, he then set out for Europe in 1828 and devoted a full year to archival research at the Board of Trade and Plantations in London, the

10. Thomas Powell, "Contents," *The Living Authors of America*, first series (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1850).

11. David Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (1959; New York: A Harbinger Book, 1963): 3-45.

12. See Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Spark*, II: 1-25.

War Department in Paris and other public and private institutions in England and France.[13] What he achieved through the nine years of preparation was simply outstanding. The whole essential writings of Washington — both official and personal, military and political, and previously known and unknown — were put together for the first time ever. The feat obviously made George Bancroft envious, as he wrote to Sparks, "You are a lucky fellow; selected by a favoring Providence, to conduct a good ship into the haven of immortality, and to have your own name recorded as the careful pilot."[14]

With all the documentary facts thus collected, the historian's task was to mark out a general outline of history. Or Sparks might have preferred to call it a "principle" or "law" of history, as he used the terms repeatedly in his writings. His "*elementary principles* [of history], deduced from facts of a certain class" covered "The moving springs of the whole, residing in the condition and spirit of the people, their form of government, political maxims, laws and local habits; and also the effects of great movements and changes on the happiness of the people, the security of their rights, and national prosperity." Elsewhere he also spelled out the same principles as those "which regulate society in its various stages of improvement; the opinions, motives, and designs of men as indicated by their actions," and the pursuit of these principles was the sum and substance of what he called "philosophical history."

Such are the outlines of what may properly be called philosophical history. It teaches

13. As for the pre-publication history of *The Writings of George Washington*, see Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, I: 389-510; II: 1-131, 208-64. Sparks himself wrote about the project. See Jared Sparks, *An Account of the Manuscript Papers of George Washington, Which Were Left by Him at Mount Vernon; with a Plan for Their Publication* (Boston: s.n., 1827); Jared Sparks, *A Reply to the Strictures of Lord Mahon and Others on the Mode of Editing the Writings of Washington* (Cambridge: John Bartlett, 1852): 31-33. See also Deane, *In Memoriam Jared Sparks,* 15-17; Mayer, *Memoir of Jared Sparks,* 15-20. As for Sparks's declaration of intention in the *North American Review* of reclaiming the Americana documents in the various departmental archives in London, see Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past*, 106.

14. Bancroft to Sparks, August 25, 1827, and Bancroft to Sparks, June 4,1829, reprinted in John Spencer Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of George Bancroft and Jared Sparks, 1823-1832, Illustrating the Relation between Editor and Reviewer in the Early Nineteenth Century* (*Smith College Studies in History*, vol. 2, no. 2) (Northampton: Department of History of Smith College, 1917): 129.

> us not only what men have done, but why they have thus acted, and connects human conduct with the passions, affections, and impulses, which prompted it, and which are inherent in every human being. History, in this view, is another name for the science of mental philosophy, in its most practical and comprehensive sense. It brings us by analysis to the ends at which the metaphysician arrives by synthesis. The latter assumes certain first principles, and constructs from them the fabric of the human mind; the former analyses [*sic*] actions, and traces them up to their causes, linking one to the other in an unbroken chain.[15]

While metaphysics begins with the universal axioms to explain the particular cases, history, as Sparks envisioned, follows the opposite course from the particulars to the universals. Starting with a chunk of discrete individual facts, he sought to digest them into "a united, continuous, lucid, and philosophical whole, bearing the shape, and containing the substance of genuine history," which was the goal of his entire historiographical project.[16]

Collecting documentary sources is one thing, but it is quite another to detect a general tendency of history in them and even give them a narrative order. Sparks knew it was a challenging stunt, especially when his history writing should avoid any theoretical preconceptions and conjectures. History, he claimed, was an exact science based on factual data.[17] In his "Preface to the First American Edition" of William Smyth's *Lectures on Modern History, from the Irruption of the Northern Nations to the Close of the American Revolution* (1840; the first American edition was published in 1841), he set the disciplinary standards on empirical facts, and flatly rejected "vague generalization and speculative theories" which

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15. The last three quotes in this paragraph are from Jared Sparks, "Remarks on the Study of History in American College" (Written, September 1835) MS Sparks 132, Vol. VII, B-90.

16. Jared Sparks, "American History," *The Boston Book: Being Specimens of Metropolitan Literature*, ed., B. B. Thatcher (Boston: Light & Stearns, 1837): 121.

17. As the quote from Sparks's preface to *Lectures on Modern History* shows, his history writing followed the Baconian method, or that of natural history's inductive reasoning. The relationship between natural history and nineteenth-century history writing is the main topic of Chapter Four of the present thesis.

would only distort the dictates of a sound judgment: "Like the inductive philosophy in science, the instruction sought from history proceeds from known facts to general results."[18] It was only natural that he turned out such an earnest collector of documentary materials, which alone endorsed the value of a historical account.[19] A mere collection of documentary facts, however, don't speak in a harmonized voice for themselves. The problem of Sparks's method was that it was never clear how to proceed "from known facts to general results." Between individual facts, a causal chain doesn't surface automatically. It is the historian's viewpoint or interpretive frame of reference that gives a specific form to discrete documents. And yet, Sparks downplayed the interpretative faculty of the historian's own, all the more obstinately for his faith in documentary facts themselves, which, he thought, would lead up to the objective truth of historical causation, although he didn't tell how.

Sparks explained the difficulty of his task as that of a long rough journey, quite an appropriate metaphor for the one who had dedicated a good many years of his professional life to tough research trips:[20] "The traveller, who undertakes a long journey, must expect to pass over rough roads as well as smooth, go up hills as well as down, if he would see the whole country, and attain his journey's end at last. So is History…. He [the historian] must search for causes, and connect them with effects; keep this connexion in his own mind as he goes along; and then his instruction will be complete, both as unfolding the principles, motives, and designs of the actors, and the importance and consequences of their acts."[21] In his later years, after all the actual journeys both domestic and international, Sparks might

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18. Jared Sparks, "Preface to the First American Edition," William Smyth, *Lectures on Modern History, from the Irruption of the Northern Nations to the Close of the American Revolution* (Cambridge : John Owen, 1841): vi, vii.

19. As for Sparks's document hunting, see Yamaguchi, "The Agony of Professor Sparks," 290-98 [*Written in Japanese].

20. Richard Hofstadter referred to the difficulties of research trip for early American historians in his *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968): 8-9.

21. Jared Sparks, "Lecture V: Continental Money, and Finances of the Revolution" (Boston, Nov. 30, 1838; College, Apr. 29, 1839 and May 13, 1840) in "Twelve Lectures" First series (1838-39) *Lectures 1839-40* (MS Sparks 132 Vol. VIII): V: 1.

have realized that he would never finish another journey of threading the heap of source materials into a united narrative whole. Purportedly, he had intended to write a *History of the Foreign Diplomacy of the Revolution* and a *History of the Revolution* itself, but both of them didn't come into the world.[22] He even had in mind an idea of history textbook, whose tentative title he put down in his journal, although this project didn't see the light of day either.

Outlines
of
American History
Being
a
Summary of the Principal Events,
Political, Civil, & Military,
Which Have Occurred in the
United States
from the First Discovery of the Country
to the End of Washington Administration;
Designed for
Colleges, Academies, & High Schools.
One Volume.[23]

What Sparks faced was, in brief, the growing amount of historical materials and the agony of synthesization. As archival researches advanced, the nineteenth-century historians could employ an increasing amount of documentary sources with more authenticity and reality. But at the same time, they were also overwhelmed by the ongoing flood of materials, which anytime threatened to fill up beyond manageability. The variety and volume of

22. Mayer, *Memoir of Jared Sparks,* 22-23.

23. Jared Sparks, "A Book Title projected by him" *Miscellanies* (MS Sparks 33): 215

documentary evidence contributed to the verisimilitude of historical accounts, while its infinite plenitude held every attempt at historical comprehension incomplete. More turned out to be less, in a sense. This was not a personal flaw in Sparks's method, but one of the structural features of history writing in the age of document overload. As Ann Rigney succinctly points out, "This paradoxical state of being overextended and yet unfinished would seem to be endemic to representations of the past."[24]

If imperfection was intrinsic to any project of a long and exhaustive history, the best possible measure would be scale management and focusing,[25] only Sparks did not care anything about how hefty his writing projects were going to be. He was a man of encyclopedic thoroughness, always aspiring to multi-volume publications, such as *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* (12 vols., 1829-30), *The Works of Benjamin Franklin: With Notes, and a Life of the Author* (10 vols., 1836-40), as well as the twelve-volume *Writings of George Washington.* These tomes were all in need of re-editing to make sense, although the task didn't fall on him. His editorship of *The Library of American Biography* (first series, 10 vols., 1834-38; second series, 15 vols., 1844-47) was another example of his proclivity toward long books, and in the field of biography, too, his point lay in the collection of solid documentary sources. The true character of a great man could be sought only in the mass of documentary facts. In his biography of George Washington, he claimed "Whoever would understand the character of Washington, in all its compass and grandeur, must learn it from his own writings."[26] For Sparks, biography was essentially the same as modern positivist and research-based history. "Biography is," in his own words, "another form of history; truth is the first requisite, simplicity of style the next. It admits of no

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24. Ann Rigney, *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001): 60.

25. See Rigney, *Imperfect Histories*, 68-76. See also Rigney, "Relevance, Revision and the Fear of Long Books," in Frank Ankersmit and Hans Kellner, eds., *A New Philosophy of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995): 127-47.

26. Jared Sparks, *The Life of George Washington* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1839): vi.

embellishments, that would give it the air of fiction."[27] As well as in his documentary history, the truth of biography was established through documentary evidence, as he emphatically rejected unsubstantiated traditions and assumptions.[28]

Sparks *did* write up biographical pieces, whereas he failed to do with the projects of comprehensive history. This, however, did not mean that he could manage narrative wholeness successfully in biography. On the contrary, the problem of making sense with ever-increasing source materials still haunted his biography writing. Abundance in documentary facts was prerequisite to the objectivity of any research, but it did not lead to anywhere without a certain exercise of arrangement and judgment on the biographer's/historian's end. Particularities, in other words, would be useless, independent of subjective intervention. What Sparks did in his biography writing, while persisting on its objectivity firmly as ever, was to tuck away this willful subjectivity in a sort of textual closet. Quite intriguingly, his biographical text told two stories at a time: the one was a life story of the subject, and the other was of the biographer's own. While the biography ostensibly stuck to solid facts and objective data of the one who was described in it, the biographer's own interest or imagination informed the whole volume through the medium of footnotes. This double-story structure exemplified the conflict between erudition (documentary thoroughness and objectivity) and narrative (generalization and readability) from a different angle.

III. The Editor's Duty/Liberty

The Writings of George Washington was a monumental work of documentary, if not narrative, history, and Sparks's literary reputation was firmly established by the publication. Still, it also entangled him with a controversy over the editorial method for handling

27. Jared Sparks, ed., *The Library of American Biography*, vol. 1 (1834; Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Co., 1839): iv.

28. Sparks carefully distinguished historical fact (public document) from tradition (unsubstantiated lore), and his interest was in the former. See Scott E. Casper, *Constructing American Lives: Biography & Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), specifically, Chapter 3 "Truth and Tradition, Nation and Section, 1820-1860," 135-92.

historical manuscripts. The criticism came out in 1851, almost fifteen years after the completion of *The Writings*, first from one Friar Lubin, a contributor to *The New York Evening Post*, and then from Lord Mahon, a British historian and politician, who denounced the editor's "liberty to tamper with the original MSS" extensively in the appendix to the sixth volume of his *History of England* (1851).[29] It proved not so clear which one actually prevailed over the other, considering that the contemporary practice of source editing was not well institutionalized,[30] but over the course of more than two years of debate, at least two important aspects of Sparks's history writing came to the fore: that is, his sterilization of historical documents that precluded the possibility of interpretation for one thing, and his implicit use of footnotes as a site of expression for the other.

The controversy centered on the discrepancies between Washington's letters in *The Writings* and those contained in other compilations. Both Friar Lubin and Lord Mahon based

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29. Lord Mahon, *History of England from the Peace of Utrecht*, vol. 6 (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1851): 90n.

The controversy started with "Nuces Literariae, by Friar Lubin," *New York Evening Post* (February 12, 1851): 2. *Cambridge Chronicle* partially reprinted the article in its 20 February 1851 issue (page 2), and *Literary World* also reported on it in "Mr. Jared Sparks's Liberties with George Washington," *Literary World* 8 (March 1, 1851): 165, 170. Although Lord Mahon's point concurred with Friar Lubin's, Lord Mahon insisted that he had not read the *Evening Post* article before he himself issued the criticism in his book. See Lord Mahon, *Letter to Jared Sparks, Esq.; Being a Rejoinder to His "Reply to the Strictures of Lard Mahon and Others on the Mode of Editing the Writings of Washington"* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1852): 4.

30. According to George H. Callcott, Sparks actually agonized over the problem of corrections and omissions of historical manuscripts. Before starting to edit Washington's writings, he asked for the opinions of other historians, statesmen, and even John Quincy Adams, then President of the United States, who, Sparks wrote in his journal for January 15, 1828, "thought it best to correct freely all blunders in orthography and grammar which appeared in Washington's letters." Other people and institutions, too, advised Sparks to correct and revise grammatical and verbal mistakes in the manuscripts. The journal entry for his interview with John Quincy Adams and other advices Sparks took are located in Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Spark*, II, 269 and II, 268-78. See also Callcott, *History in the United States 1800-1860: Its Practice and Purpose* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970): 129.

their charges on the comparison of Washington's letters to Joseph Reed reprinted in *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed* (edited by William B. Reed, his grandson; 2 vols., 1847) and the same letters in Sparks's collection. In one letter, for example, while Washington mentioned "Old Put," Sparks made him say "General Putnam." When Washington referred to a small sum of money as "a flea-bite at present," Sparks replaced the phrase with "totally inadequate to our demands at this time." And although Washington was obviously disgusted with the Massachusetts people when he wrote "notwithstanding all the public virtue which is ascribed to these people, there is no nation under the sun, that I ever came across, pays greater adoration to money than they do," Sparks simply omitted the whole passage from his book.[31] As a Victorian Tory politician whose interest lay in "our own story" of the revolution, Lord Mahon had a good reason to think that these textual modifications were unduly idealizing General Washington as a paragon of moral virtue.[32]

In the course of the epistolary crossfire, Lord Mahon was forced to partially admit the validity of Sparks's rejoinders and retract some of his accusations against him of having made unwarrantable additions to the original sources,[33] but as to other charges, *i.e.*, those of correction and omission, his stance did not waver to the last. "Is it not quite clear in these cases," he interrogated his opponent, "that you were seeking to use language more conformable to Washington's dignity of character than Washington could use for himself?" and "to what other motive besides 'embellishment' are we to ascribe your omission of all the vehement language" of Washington's, which might "wound in any manner the sensitive feelings of New England"? What Sparks did with the manuscripts was nothing but

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31. See Lord Mahon, *Letter to Jared Sparks*, 8-9, and "Appendix," *History of England*, VI: v, vii.

32. Lord Mahon, *History of England*, VI: iii. The cited phrase was from the Robert Southey's letter to Lord Mahon, which was inserted as a preamble to the criticism of Sparks's document editing.

33. Sparks's first response was published under the title, *A Reply to the Strictures of Lord Mahon and Others on the Mode of Editing the Writings of Washington* (Cambridge: John Bartlett, 1852). Lord Mahon withdrew some of his charges in his rejoinder, *Letter to Jared Sparks*, 3-8. *The New York Times* ran an article on Lord Mahon's retraction and reported in favor of Sparks. See "Lord Mahon's Retraction" *The New York Times* (October 1, 1852).

"tampering with the truth of history."[34]

In response to these censures, Sparks conceded that he did correct and omit some of Washington's writings, but for other reasons than what Lord Mahon alleged.

> It would certainly be strange, if editor should undertake to prepare for the press a collection of manuscript letters, many of them hastily written, without a thought that they would ever be published, and should not at the same time regard it as a solemn duty to correct obvious slips of the pen, occasional inaccuracies of expression, and manifest faults of grammar, which the writer himself, if he could have revised his own manuscripts, would never for a moment have allowed to appear in print.
>
> This is all I have done in the way of altering or correcting Washington's letters. The alternations are strictly verbal or grammatical; nor am I conscious that, in this process, an historical fact, the expression of an opinion, or the meaning of a sentence, has, on any occasion, been perverted or modified.[35]

Only naturally were Washington's private and confidential letters written in haste and negligence and not originally intended for publication. It was not an unauthorized license then, but every conscientious editor's duty or "an act of justice to the memory of the author, to revise with care for the press."[36] Sparks also insisted that he had never meant to deceive the public nor concealed any secret design, for he had duly mentioned "a latitude of discretion" he used in editing right in the "Introduction" to *The Writings of George Washington*: "I have of course considered it a duty, appertaining to the function of a faithful editor, to hazard such corrections as the construction of the sentence manifestly warranted,

34. Lord Mahon, *Letter to Jared Sparks*, 9-10, 18, 5; and Appendix," *History of England*, VI: vi.

35. Sparks, *A Reply to the Strictures of Lord Mahon and Others*, 6.

36. Sparks, *A Reply to the Strictures of Lord Mahon and Others*, 7.

or a cool judgment dictated."[37] Given the meaning and purpose of the original passage intact, he maintained, there was nothing wrong with rectifying verbal and grammatical inaccuracies.

Although other contemporary historians — John Gorham Palfrey, Washington Irving, Edward Everett, Peter Force and others — were eager to advocate and even follow Sparks's editorial principles,[38] it seems strange or contradictory that he could reconcile those acts of textual manipulation with his dogged faith in original manuscripts, which he thought to be the one and only foundation of history writing:

> An historical work will be valuable, in proportion as the author draws his materials from the *original sources*. Authorities at second hand may be erroneous, or at least tinged with the opinions of the writer, or in some degree perverted by his manner of viewing subjects. Official documents, reports, letters, and records of public proceedings are the best sources. Private letters of the principal actors, written at the time of the events, will often explain causes, which are not obvious, and may generally be relied on for facts.[39]

Original manuscripts were the best sources to be counted on for facts. How could Sparks revise and correct then, even if the alterations were, as Sparks claimed, limited to minor phrases? Or let me put it this way: how could he possibly bowdlerize the original sources which were the only purveyors of historical facts and without which history would never be an exact science?

Wittingly or unwittingly, Sparks altered Washington's original words so as to rule out

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37. Jared Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington; Being His Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official andPrivate, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts; with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations,* 12 vols. (1834; New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1847): II: xv.

38. As for the contemporary historians' defense of Sparks, see Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, II, 280-310, 507-19; and Callcott, *History in the United States 1800-1860*, 129-32.

39. Jared Sparks, "Sources of History," *Miscellanies* (MS Sparks 33, Houghton Library, Harvard University): 343.

the possibility of interpretation in history writing. With all the documentary facts collected at hand, the historian's task was to mark out a general outline of history, and this, he insisted, strictly without any theoretical preconception, subjective interpretation, or even work of imagination. History as an exact science should attend to what documentary data speak for themselves instead. And yet, he must have thought, Washington's phraseology would stimulate the reader's imagination to run wild, which in turn would impede an objective understanding of Washington in full. The occasional appearances of vulgar phrases and invectives were nothing but noises that needed to be cleaned away, so that the true resources of Washington's mind could be clearly discernible. The more belief Sparks put in the importance of manuscript sources, the more strenuously he had the reader's interpretation and imagination forestalled, and the more clean and sterile the documents became in his hands. The character of Washington, "manifesting" itself in the thus sanitized documents, was an equally sterilized, as it were, official image of Washington, which allowed no room for imagination to squeeze in.[40]

Sparks did succeed in this project of dusting off Washington. The anti-interpretive attitude precluded the possibility of his own monograph on Washington, to be sure, but his primary object in editing the documents was not to write about Washington, but to *be* Washington and do what Washington would have done in his days. He had to efface himself as much as possible. After about ten weeks of researches at Mount Vernon, he came back to Boston with the whole mass of Washington's writings entrusted by Judge Bushrod Washington, custodian of his uncle's papers,[41] and he later moved into the Craigie house (now also known as the Longfellow House, 105 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts) where General Washington set up headquarters during the Revolutionary War. In his journal

40. Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington*, II: xi.

41. Sparks arrived at Mount Vernon on March 14, 1827 and left on May 25, 1827. The crates of Washington Papers reached Boston a few days after he came home on June 10.

While in Mount Vernon, Sparks wrote a long letter to Judge Washington to ask permission to remove the whole set of Washington's manuscripts to Boston and the proposal was accepted. See Sparks to Judge Washington, April 17, 1827 and May 7, 1827, both reprinted in Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, II: 15-23, 24-25.

for April 2, 1833, he wrote in genuine delight: "This day began to occupy Mrs. Craigie's house in Cambridge. It is a singular circumstance that, while I am engaged in preparing for the press the letters of General Washington which he wrote at Cambridge after taking command of the American army, I should occupy the same room that he did at that time."[42]

Thus the editor and the writer were one. All the more for his virtual identification with the subject, Sparks could edit and correct Washington's clumsy wordings "which the writer himself, if he could have revised his own manuscripts, would never for a moment have allowed to appear in print." He turned out to be even bolder: he snipped a signature of Washington from a letter and gave it away to a friend, and cut up quite a few manuscripts which he deemed unimportant or likely to create "room for misapprehension," including a seventy-three-page draft of Washington's first Inauguration Address.[43] Many historians and biographers admit that George Washington is the most inscrutable of all the American historic figures. That inscrutability might be ascribed partly to the first president's innate personality, but perhaps it is also due to Sparks's unfortunate editorial scythe.[44]

And of course, this is not a historian's job, not by any standard.

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42. Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, II: 277.

43. Sparks to James Madison, May 22, 1827, in Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, II: 212. In the same letter, Sparks referred to the seventy-three-page draft of the Inauguration Address, and put down his idea of not including it among the papers for the press. Madison concurred with him in his reply dated May 30, 1827. See Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, II: 212-14.

As for Sparks's mishandling of Washington Papers, many critics refers to it as "one of the most flagrant injuries ever inflicted by an editor upon a writer." See, for example, Jill Lepore, "His Highness," *The New Yorker* 86 (September 27, 2010), reprinted in Lepore, *The Story of America : Essays on Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012): 130-45. The Library of Congress website samples one of the pages Sparks ripped out of Washington's diary and gave away. See "History of the Diary Manuscripts" in "Introduction" to *The Diaries of George Washington*, < http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/6gwintro.html > Web, January 10, 2014.

44. John C. Fitzpatrick re-collected as many scattered documents as he could and published them in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, 39 vols. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-44).

IV. The Biographer's (Sub-)Voice

Is it really possible to eliminate interpretation and imagination from reading, while every reader has his or her own subjective intellectual self? Evidently, no, and neither could Sparks. His anti-interpretive principle did not implement the total erasure of his own self, but it rather concealed the editor's presence behind the allegedly objective representations. Sparks was certainly there in the text, with a profile so low.

The publication of *The Writings of George Washington* started in 1834 with volumes 2 and 3 that comprised a part of the official correspondence section, and after putting the eleven volumes of Washington's writings in print, Sparks crowned the whole series with his biography of Washington (volume 1) in 1837. Apparently, he was very cautious to the last. He wrote in his "Preface" to the biography volume: "Avoiding historical disquisitions, reflections, and remarks not connected with the immediate purpose, the object has been to explain the writings and acts of Washington."[45] By implication, it follows that the biography was a work of high objectivity, free from his own interpretive disquisitions and reflections. But was it? Granted that he controlled his account of the first president strictly within documentary evidence, the biographer's own voice was not completely muted but certainly audible, though not in the main body of the text. That is, in footnotes instead.

Footnoting is, by first definition, a technical practice of a scholarly (particularly, historical) profession which ensures the authenticity of a narrative or argument and legitimatizes its writer as an academic, serious writer. The clamor of liberal revolutions still reverberating in the air, the early nineteenth century witnessed the great opening of once secret archives both in Europe and America, and the mass of documentary facts, thus unleashed, implemented a new style of history, which was essentially positivist, source-oriented, or simply Rankean.[46] And although Leopold von Ranke himself actually hesitated

45. Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington*, I: x.

46. As for the relationships between liberal revolutions, the opening of archival vaults and a new mode of history writing, see Donald R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 132-39; and Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997): 50-60. See also Ranke's own remarks on

to disfigure his narrative with "the ugly contrivances of scholarly mechanics," the new research-based method demanded careful documentation of source materials with footnotes.[47] Even the so-called Romantic historians — George Bancroft, William Hickling Prescott, John Lothrop Motley, and Francis Parkman — equipped their elegant narratives with a significant amount of footnotes and bibliographical discussions. The contemporary reading public either didn't take referencing notes as an eyesore on the page. On the contrary, they welcomed them as a sure mark of academic integrity and authenticity.[48]

Predictably enough, Sparks was an avid footnoter, as well as an indefatigable collector, of historical documents. For more than ten years of archival research and document editing for *The Writings of George Washington*, his main business had been selecting, arranging, collating and footnoting (let us skip revising and cutting up for now). While at Mount Vernon in 1827, he put down his idea of footnoting in his letters to Joseph Story. His plan was, here again, "to confine the notes strictly to facts, and plain deductions illustrative of the text, keeping clear of conjectures, speculations, and theories."[49]

> Notes and historical additions will be inserted throughout the work, tending to elucidate the text, and to place in the clearest view the motives, opinions, and actions of Washington. In discharging this duty, however, special care will be taken to avoid prolixity, and to introduce nothing which shall not have a direct bearing on the subject in hand, for it is not my purpose to connect with the writings of Washington a

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archival research in Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History* (London: Routledge, 2011), especially, "On the Character of Historical Science (MS of the 1830s)": 5-7; and "Preface to the First Edition of *Histories of the Latin and Germanic Peoples* (October 1824)": 85-87.

47. Grafton, *The Footnote*, 67. As for the Rankean archival research and the usage of footnotes, see Grafton, *The Footnote*, 67-71.

48. As for the Romantic historians' practice of footnoting and the contemporary readers' response to it, see Callcott, *History in the United States 1800-1860*, 126-27.

49. Jared Sparks, *An Account of the Manuscript Papers of George Washington, Which Were Left by Him at Mount Vernon; with a Plan for Their Publication* (Boston: s.n., 1827): 17. The same letters to Joseph Story are reprinted in Adams, *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, II: 237-64.

> history of the times, any farther than that history may be developed by the writings themselves, and by the introduction of such facts as have an intimate alliance with them.[50]

Speculative interpretations, conjectural theories, and everything "which shall not have a direct bearing on the subject in hand" should be culled out "[t]o guard against the danger of redundance."[51] In the preface to his biography of Washington, he repeated the same point: "He has not attempted to write an essay, dissertation, or eulogy, but has confined himself to a biographical sketch, introducing events and incidents in their natural order, with no other remarks or reflections of his own, than such as seemed necessary to preserve just proportions in the parts, and a unity in the whole."[52] Given that each footnote was a credential to impart a sense of factuality and authenticity to the narrative, his policy was only to be expected.

Nonetheless, redundance actually sneaked into the text, and Sparks knew it. For him, a footnote was not just a device of documentation and authentication, but an implicit space of expression, which was, if marginalized, certainly another (sub-)textual strip that ran parallel to the main narrative above. Significantly, the footnotes to the biography volume of *The Writings of George Washington* were punctuated with the presence of Sparks's own self. While recounting Washington's retreat at the Battle of the Great Meadows, for instance, Sparks referred to the colonel's campaign correspondence and other papers, which had been long lost but recently found out, and in the footnote to this description, he went on to explain where and how he himself read those documents: "In the public offices at London, I examined the official communications from Governor Dinwiddie…. By the politeness of an individual in England, who had in his possession the letter-books and private papers of Governor Dinwiddie, I was permitted to inspect those papers, and to have copies taken."[53]

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50. Sparks, *An Account of the Manuscript Papers of George Washington*, 12-13.

51. Sparks, *An Account of the Manuscript Papers of George Washington*, 17.

52. Sparks, *The Life of George Washington*, v-vi.

53. Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington*, I: 48n.

Likewise, in one footnote toward the end of the volume, he suddenly turned up just like a showman coming out of a stage wing with a letter of the First Lady's, which he quoted in its entirety: "The reader cannot fail to be interested in this place with an extract from a letter written by Mrs. Washington to Mrs. Warren…."[54]

When the same biography of Washington was reprinted separately from *The Writings*, Sparks added on even more footnotes and even more frequently appeared in them. There he most typically discussed how he came across specific historical sources and what he thought of their value. In one footnote, he elaborated on his idea of source criticism and how to handle historical manuscripts and identify their authorship.

> Indeed, whoever is accustomed to consult the manuscripts of public documents will often be led into error, if he ascribes the *authorship* of every paper to the person in whose handwritings it may be found. This remark has particular force, when applied to the important papers to which Washington affixed his name…. Whatever pen he may have employed to embody these results, it may be laid down as a rule, to which there is no exception, that the writer aimed to express as clearly and compactly as he could what he knew to be the sentiments of Washington. This fact alone can account for the extraordinary uniformity in style, modes of expression, and turns of thought, which prevails throughout the immense body of Washington's letters, from his earliest youth to the end of his life. It will seldom be accurate to say, in regard to any of his papers, that the person, in whose handwriting they may be found, was their *author*….[55]

Indeed, Sparks talked about Washington's writings, but the chief topic here was *his* theory of historical source studies. It was *his* story of his own research experience and method, the story of a subjective "I." It is never clear whether he deliberately designed this textual device, but one fact remains anyway: his own voice asserted itself in footnotes, with a

54. Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington*, I: 457n.

55. Sparks, *The Life of George Washington*, 258-59n.

variety of research anecdotes and short historical essays ("at what precise date the idea of independence was first entertained by the principal persons in America," and so on), and this independently of the main narrative.[56]

If he had been his own editor, he would have cut up this textual surplus as inessential to the true import of the book. We are grateful that he was not. However aberrant it looks from a scientific point of view, we know, in every redundance, life resides.

V. Filiopietism, Blasphemy, or…

Biography entails the writer's sympathy with his or her subject. And "It is in this identity with his subject," one contemporary critic maintained, "that Mr. Sparks is the unrivaled head of American biography."[57] This is too true. Sparks not just wrote about Washington, but he played Washington and did what he must have done. When he dilated on the relationship between Washington and his amanuensis in the last cited footnote, he would have thought that he himself was a most faithful amanuensis of Washington, aiming "to express as clearly and compactly as he could what he knew to be the sentiments of Washington." In a sense, what he intimated in the footnotes was a story of the biographer's struggle with historical documents to get as near to his subject as he could.

Sparks went well beyond the biographer's filiopietistic love for his hero; on the contrary, to *be* Washington was almost approaching blasphemy. To no surprise, his Washington Papers project met with relentless criticism from various quarters, as we have seen above. Echoing Lord Mahon, one reviewer of *The Athenaeum* commented "Mr. Sparks cannot have been able to put himself in Washington's place — and he had therefore no right to change a word on that ground."[58] Another reviewer's comment in *Democratic Review* was particularly scathing:

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56. Sparks, *The Life of George Washington*, 122.

57. Thomas Powell, *The Living Authors of America*, first series (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1850): 359.

58. "Lord Mahon and Mr. Sparks," *The Living Age* 35 (October 23, 1852): 190. The article is a reprint of those first published in the 28 August and 4 September 1851 issues of *The Athenaeum: Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts* (London). See also Lord Mahon, *Letter to Jared Sparks*, 14.

"he has despoiled all our great men, and more particularly our greatest men, of their characteristics; has destroyed their individuality…. Mr. Jared Sparks has made biography what it never was before — the lie to history."[59]

From the perspective of historical disciplines, what Sparks inflicted on documentary sources is unpardonable; but from a literary point of view, his product is quite interesting and somehow familiar to the readers of fictional biographies, such as Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962), Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000), Mark Dunn's *Ibid: A Life* (2004) and others. All these texts, including Sparks's, suggest that when a biographical narrative goes on, there is always an alternative life story of the biographer's own throughout its footnotes. Definitely, footnotes vouchsafe the authenticity and scientific objectivity of a historical narrative, but at the same time they accommodate the writer's personal voice. Footnotes could be more creative than we usually think. Footnotes are a place to reconcile impartial erudition with the free play of imagination, or to use Anthony Grafton's phrase, a site of conversation, "in which modern scholars, their predecessors, and their subjects all take part."[60]

Admittedly, Sparks's *forte* was compiling, rather than narrating.[61] He had long cherished several projects of writing a general history of the American Revolution, but in his later years, he grieved over the unfulfilled ambition. "The conflict between the desire to achieve and the disability was so painful, that the subject of his projected History became a sacred one among all who were familiar with him, and, even in his family, it was passed over in silence. At times, he would look at these accumulations of years in his library, with simple

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59. "Hawthorne's Life of Pierce. — Perspective," *The United Sates Magazine and Democratic Review* 31 (September 1852): 276.

60. Grafton, *The Footnote*, 234.

61. In memory of Sparks, one Mr. Havens spoke at the meeting of the American Antiquarian Society that "he was an essayist as truly as a compiler: but the last was his forte, his peculiar field of usefulness and eminence, where it may be said that he reigns supreme." See *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, at a Special Meeting, March 16, 1866, and at the Semi-Annual Meeting at the Hall of the American Academy, in Boston, April 25, 1866* (Cambridge: Press of John Wilson and Sons, 1866): 17.

ejaculation, 'sad, sad!'"[62] Perhaps, he should have written that footnote narrative — how he discovered, deciphered, edited and interpreted manuscripts — into an independent piece of work, where he could liberate his otherwise muffled voice.

62. Mayer, *Memoir of Jared Sparks*, 23.

Chapter Three

Toward the Impersonality of History: Inductive Reasoning and the Problem of the Individual in Henry Adams's Physicist History

I. Science and Historical Studies

History, for Jared Sparks, was a legitimate branch of modern exact science, because it professedly aimed at objective truths through the inductive generalization of documentary facts. Historical objectivity was a touchstone of whether any given historical account was scientific and trustworthy. During the course of the nineteenth century, history grew to be even more widely acknowledged as a science in the United States. One of the reasons was the influence of German historiography. Idolized (or somewhat misrepresented) as a paragon of historical objectivity, Leopold von Ranke's standards of historical scholarship readily merged with Anglo-Saxon empiricism, and his "Seminary or Laboratory method" introduced a whole new way to handle historical sources critically and impartially.[1] History writing, which had been basically a solo pursuit of an independent literary elite, now turned out to be collective efforts of university scholars in "a sort of working historical laboratory," where the cooperation of diverse individuals could overcome the limitations of a single subjective point of view.[2] German-educated professors ushered the method into American universities in the late nineteenth century (Charles Kendall Adams at the University of Michigan, Henry Adams at Harvard University, and Herbert Baxter Adams at Johns Hopkins University), and once institutionalized, it in turn established historical studies as an academic discipline and profession. What Jeremy Belknap had imagined as the Republic of Letters, or for that matter, what Francis Bacon had idealized as "Salomon's House" in *New Atlantis*, American historical scholarship tried to fulfill in its cooperative and consensual

1. Peter Novick dilated on the way late-nineteenth-century American historians deliberately misunderstood Ranke's method and venerated it as the sole standard for scientific history. See Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession"* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially 21-46.

2. W. Stull Holt, "The Idea of Scientific History in America," *Journal of History of Ideas* 1. 3 (June 1940): 353;

activity of professionals, via the German model of historical science.[3]

The American Historical Association, founded as the first national coalition of historians in 1884, also was an extended laboratory for the cooperative science of history. In its inaugural meeting, Justin Winsor compared the practice of the new Association to a laboratory science, and historians to natural scientists working together in the lab.

> We are drawn together because we believe there is a new spirit of research abroad, — a spirit which emulated the laboratory work of the naturalists, using that word in its broadest sense. This spirit requires for its sustenance mutual recognition and suggestion among its devotees. We can deduce encouragement and experience stimulation by this sort of personal contact. Scholars and students can no longer afford to live isolated. They must come together to derive that zest which arises from personal acquaintance, to submit idiosyncrasies to the contact of their fellows, and they come from the convocation healthier and more circumspect.[4]

By the naturalists, "using that word in its broadest sense," Winsor meant (col-)laboratory scientists, not pre-modern philosophers of nature's eternal order. As nineteenth-century historians were something of natural scientists in the laboratory, history itself claimed kinship with natural sciences. That was the age of scientific development, and "To be scientific," one critic later looked back to note, "was the great desideratum. The very word was a fetish."[5] As might be expected, history emulated natural sciences and craved their prestige for its own, especially after the prevalence of Darwinian biology, which was also a

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3. Both Peter Novick and Peter Charles Hoffer pointed out the collective and consensual nature of late-nineteenth-century American historical scholarship. See Novick, *That Nobel Dream*, 52-90, and Hoffer, *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fiction, Fraud — History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (2004; New York: Public Affairs, 2007): 19-21.

4. Herbert B. Adams, "Report of the Organization and Proceedings of the American Historical Association, at Saratoga, September 9-10, 1884," *Papers on the American Historical Association*, Vol. 1 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1885): 11.

5. Holt, "The Idea of Scientific History in America," 352.

historical inquiry about the animal kingdom, including mankind. Herbert Baxter Adams even modeled his historical seminary room exactly after a chemistry or biology laboratory with its special apparatus and layout: "The Baltimore seminaries are laboratories where books are treated like mineralogical specimens, passed about from hand to hand, examined, and tested"[6] (see Figure 1). When historians contended that their historical accounts were scientific, it implied that "there were historical laws or generalizations which could be formulated," just as was done in natural sciences during the period.[7] They believed that historical studies, properly (*i.e.*, scientifically) pursued, would attain certain kinds of universal laws of history.

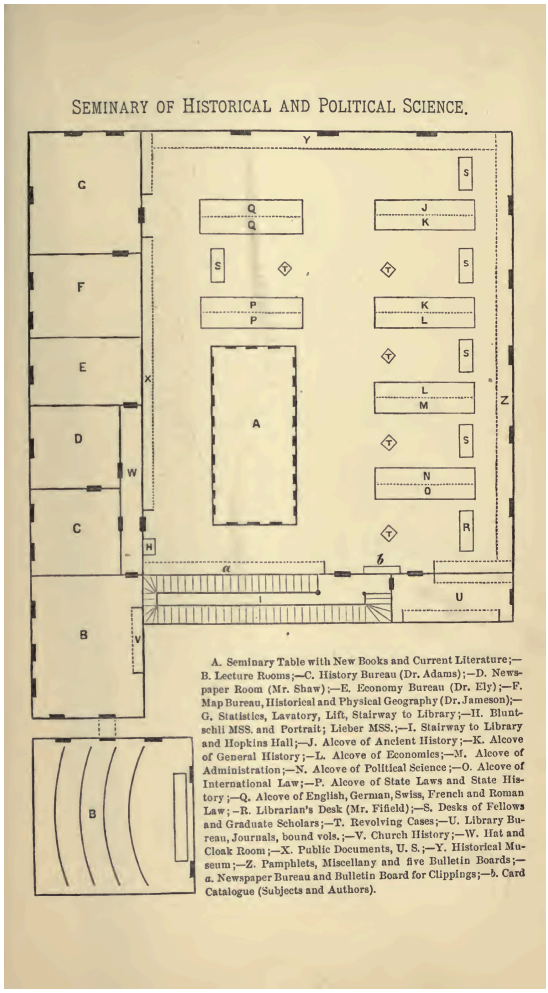

Figure 1: The layout of the historical laboratory room (Herbert Baxter Adams, "Methods of Historical Study," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, vol. II, 137)

6. Herbert B. Adams, "Methods of Historical Study," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, vol. II (Baltimore: N. Murray, Publication Agent, Johns Hopkins University, 1884): 103.

7. Holt, "The Idea of Scientific History in America," 356.

One of the most strenuous champions of this school of scientific history was Henry Adams, who noted succinctly in the closing chapter of his *History of the United States during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* (9 vols., 1889-91): "Should history ever become a true science, it must expect to establish its laws."[8] Although he later assessed his own historiographical endeavors typically as a failure, the pursuit of historical laws remained his ruling passion until the very end of his literary career. In 1910, when Adams printed and distributed an essay titled "A Letter to American Teachers of History" to university libraries and professors, he evaluated the impact of Darwinism on historical studies, especially for its establishment of a scientific law of nature, under which the whole human history should be governed and interpreted.

> This popular understanding of Darwinism had little to do with Darwin, whose great service, — in the field of history, — consisted by no means in his personal theories either of natural selection, or of adaptation, or of uniform evolution; which might be all abandoned without affecting his credit for bringing all vital processes under the law of development or evolution, — whether upward or downward being immaterial to the principle that all history must be studied as a science.[9]

Adams didn't think he was a Darwinist. He was rather incredulous or disillusioned of the

8. Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of James Madison* (New York: Library of America, 1986): 1332-33.

9. Henry Adams, "A Letter to American Teachers of History," reprinted in *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* (1919; New York: Capricorn Books, 1958): 149.

We can read "A Letter to American Teachers of History" in *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*. The book was published posthumously in 1919 as an anthology of Adams's theoretical works on physicist historiography, which, in addition to "A Letter," included "The Tendency of History" (a 1894 letter to the American Historical Association), "The Rule of Phase Applied to History" (1909), and Brooks Adams's biographical note. A bit confusingly, the contents of *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* was also published under the title of *The Tendency of History* in the same year, although Brooks Adams's memoir was slashed off the text.

idea of progressive evolution, at least in American history, which showed him nothing but a downward course of human degeneration, or a reversion to "the stone age" that had been going underway back from the days of virtuous George Washington through those of "pre-intellectual" Ulysses S. Grant.[10] The concept of evolution itself didn't make any difference, however. The overall advance of modern natural sciences suggested to him, instead, that while nature was directed by a set of ascertainable laws, human beings and their history also followed the same laws because they were a part of nature. What his argument boiled down to was history as "the Science of Vital Energy in relation with time; and of late the radiating centre of its life has been steadily tending, — together with every form of physical and mechanical energy, — towards mathematical expression."[11] The study of history was to calculate the volume and direction of that energy, which he thought was best understood according to the thermodynamic theory of energy dissipation and the rule of phase.

Henry Adams, self-professedly "the physicist-historian,"[12] sought to track down the physico-mathematical law of "Vital Energy" that controlled the entire course of universal history. For argument's sake, we might as well assume that there is such an "Energy" circulating through and directing human history. But, what is this "Energy" or, as Adams sometimes rephrased it, "force" anyway? Our confusion would never be dispelled when he identified the energy with "Thought": "Thought is the highest or subtlest energy of nature. The sun is an immense energy, but does its work on earth only by expending 2,300,000,000 times more than equivalent energy in space, while Thought does more work without expending any equivalent energy at all."[13] Henry's younger brother, Brooks Adams also grew to be a scientific historian and referred to the similar energy or "forces," but his explanation did not make anything clear either, or on the contrary, it partook of something of occultism: "Such great movements [of history], however, are not determined by

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10. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918), reprinted in *Democracy, Esther, Mont Saint Michel and Chartres, The Education of Henry Adams* (New York: Library of America, 1983): 963, 962

11. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 203.

12. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 280.

13. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 216.

argument, but are determined by forces which override the volition of man."[14] The scientific methods of historical objectivity and primary source criticism were great standards, but the end product of scientific history was, to say the least, mystifying and not nearly so scientific as it should have been.

This chapter discusses Henry Adams's idea of scientific history. Adams's literary career straddled the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth. His historiography was a rightful heir to the nineteenth-century "cult of facts" and scientific laws of history, while it was soon to be supplanted by the new century's pragmatic and relativistic turns of history writing. It was at once a consummation of scientific history and its dead end. Thus his thermodynamic model of history exhibited the features of nineteenth-century scientific history in sharp relief, so that we can reconsider the inherent problems of "That Noble Dream" of historical objectivity both in its ambition and failure.[15] Adams's fusion of human affairs and thermodynamics was such a well-wrought theory of history, but, as we will see, it ended up in a surprisingly impersonal, inhuman and somehow apocalyptic vision of history, which almost closed in on a sheer nonsense.

II. The Problem of the Individual

Henry Adams's scientific history was an epitome and epilogue of American historiography up to the late nineteenth century. In his final estimate, the course of human history was fully abstracted into an inverse square curve, which indicated the rate of acceleration of historical phase change (Figure 2). Here is Adams's own exposition of the diagram.

> Throughout these three hundred years, and especially in the nineteenth century, the acceleration suggests at once the old, familiar law of squares. The curve resembles

14. Brooks Adams, "The Spanish War and the Equilibrium of the World," *Forum* 25. 6 (August 1898): 651.

15. Cf. Charles A. Beard, "That Noble Dream," *The American Historical Review* 41. 1 (October 1935): 74-87.

> that of the vaporization of water. The resemblance is too close to be disregarded, for nature loves the logarithm, and perpetually recurs to her inverse square. For convenience, if only as a momentary refuge, the physicist-historian will probably have to try the experiment of taking the law of inverse squares as his standard of social acceleration for the nineteenth century, and consequently for the whole phase, which obliges him to accept it experimentally as a general law of history.[16]

The diagram looks scientific and the accompanying discussion sounds abstruse as well. Still, this vision of human history is widely apart from what we usually take it to be, that is, a continuous record of miscellaneous human events. Adams's "general law of history" was so impersonal as to have almost nothing to do with human agency. His so-called "Dynamic Theory of History" was a contemporary coalescence of history and modern experimental sciences taken to the limit (or beyond it, perhaps).

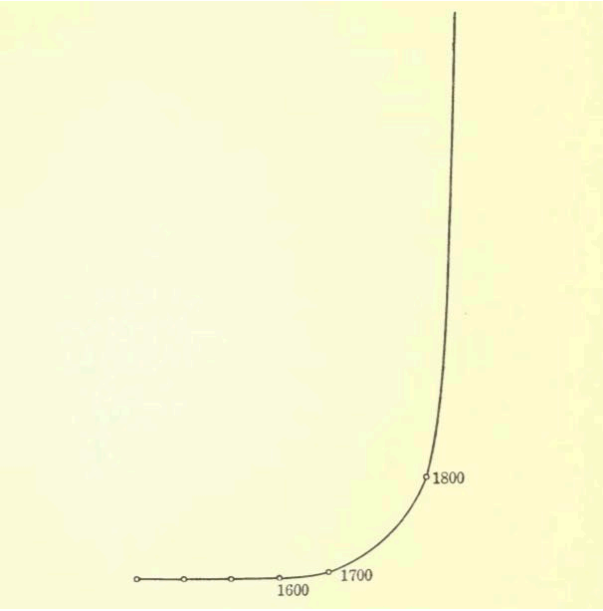

Figure 2: The acceleration rate of historical phase change (Henry Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 286)

No matter how abstract his resultant theory was, Adams must have started with specific individual data, just as other nineteenth-century empirical historians did. When he took the assistant professorship of history at Harvard in 1870, his courses in medieval English and European history were managed by the seminary method, which featured the critical

16. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 285.

examination of historical sources among the participants — the students as well as the professor — in the manner of laboratory experiment. Adams moaned that the contemporary practice of history was "a hundred years behind the experimental sciences. For all serious purpose, it was less instructive than Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas,"[17] and his seminary was to renovate historical studies with the scientific method and restore history to its objective truthfulness. Actually, the attempt was so fruitful. Adams remembered:

> As pedagogy, nothing could be more triumphant. The boys worked like rabbits, and dug holes all over the field of archaic society; no difficulty stopped them; unknown languages yielded before their attack, and customary law became familiar as the police court; undoubtedly they learned, after a fashion, to chase an idea, like a hare, through as dense a thicket of obscure facts as they were likely to meet at the bar….[18]

The collective efforts of source criticism and discussion produced a definite product in a published form, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law* (1876). His Harvard seminary was later designated as "One of the earliest and most successful applications of the seminary-method in this country."[19]

Adams's own U.S. history also was a product of thorough archival research and strict source criticism. He believed, for good reason, that it would be fairly possible to reconstruct the past through the impartial handling of individual documentary facts.

> Historians undertake to arrange sequences, — called stories, or histories — assuming in silence a relation of cause and effect…. He [Adams] had even published a dozen volumes of American history for no other purpose than to satisfy himself whether, by severest process of stating, with the least possible comment, such facts as seemed sure, in such order as seemed rigorously consequent, he could fix for a familiar

17. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 995.

18. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 996-97.

19. Herbert B. Adams, "Methods of Historical Study," 87.

moment a necessary sequence of human movement.[20]

And yet, he continued, "The result had satisfied him as little as at Harvard College. Where he saw sequence, other men saw something quite different, and no one saw the same unit of measure."[21] He collected as many documents as he could and collated them as impartially, but his endeavor finally ended up in a realization that he could not detect in them "a necessary sequence of human movement," a regular pattern of historical events. For all the achievements of his seminary course at Harvard, too, he had been inwardly pessimistic about its effect: "his wonderful method led nowhere…. Their science [history] had no system, and could have none, since its subject was merely antiquarian."[22] Obviously, the method, however scientific and objective it claimed to be, was not enough to formulate a general law of history.

This is, again, a case of the deep-seated conflict between erudition and narrative, the same problem Jared Sparks faced and failed to resolve in his documentary history projects. For Adams, antiquarianism was set right opposite to historical generalization. It was "the sink of history" or only "anecdotage."[23] Each story might present a specific fact in detailed miniature, to be sure, but the mere accumulation of documentary facts didn't automatically add up to a narrative whole, let alone a general law of history. Discrete individual episodes continued to be discrete individual episodes, unless some theoretical perspective or frame of reference was applied onto them. It was the working of a contextual point of view that drew a causal (and imaginary) line connecting one episode with the other; otherwise the collection of episodic facts would lead nowhere.

Of course, any "perspective" smacked of subjectivity, and subjectivity was anathema to scientific history. What Adams turned to instead was scientific theories. He employed natural sciences not just for their inductive method, but for their laws and theories, as

20. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1068-69.

21. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1069.

22. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 997.

23. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 922, 923.

possible explanations of human history. Even in his *History of the United Sates*, which he regarded as a failure, he had hinted at applying scientific laws to history. American history, he once claimed, was best explained by means of scientific theories; for the nation itself was literally a sort of laboratory "so large, uniform, and isolated as to answer the purpose of science."[24]

> Historians and readers maintained Old-World standards. No historian cared to hasten the coming of an epoch when man should study his own history in the same spirit and by the same methods with which he studies the formation of a crystal. Yet history had its scientific as well as its human side, and in American history the scientific interest was greater than the human. Elsewhere the student could study under better conditions the evolution of the individual, but nowhere could he study so well the evolution of a race. The interest of such a subject exceeded that of any other branch of science, for it brought mankind within sight of its own end.[25]

History could be studied just in the same manner as one "studies the formation of a crystal." The above-cited seminary or laboratory method dealt with historical documents and books as "specimens" to be examined critically and impartially. Adams took one bold step further. He regarded the course of history itself as a mechanism that followed the scientific laws of nature. American history was favorable for such an analysis, because it featured "the scientific interest" much greater than "the human." Adams then measured its course by the second law of thermodynamics (or the principle of entropy) and the rule of phase.

Adams's history writing was scientific in two ways. First, just like other modern scientific disciplines, including Ranke's historical empiricism, it was based on *inductive* reasoning to derive a conclusion from a mass of individual evidence. As we have seen, however, the method disappointed him, and he then reversed the order of argument. That is, he took up a couple of scientifically confirmed theories as general rules of the world and

24. Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of James Madison,* 1333.

25. Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of James Madison,* 1334.

applied them to human history to prove its specific pattern *deductively* from them. Both ways, history could stay related with science, but in totally incompatible manners. The first one, induction, was a bottom-up logic proceeding from particular data to general laws, while the second one, deduction, was top-down starting with general laws to verify specific situations. What Adams faced then was a typical case of "the problem of induction": a failure of inductive reasoning to explain the move from particulars to generalizations in a purely inductive way, or the impossibility of clear-cut distinction between induction and deduction.[26] In a sense, when Adams turned to the thermodynamic theory, it worked as a prescription for his historical studies, and each individual fact had to conform to it, with its jagged individuality smoothly filed away. Although modern historical discipline established itself by focusing on individual facts, the very individual was now reduced into an abstract type.

Or the individual was simply disregarded. The last quote clearly shows Adams's interest lies in "the evolution of a race" rather than "the evolution of the individual." As a Harvard professor, he even noted that the study of "a steady movement" of history would entail a methodological blindness to particular details.

> If the historian will only consent to shut his eyes for a moment to the microscopic analysis of personal motives and idiosyncrasies, he cannot but become conscious of a silent pulsation that commands his respect, a steady movement that *resembles* in its mode of operation the mechanical action of Nature herself. (Italics mine)[27]

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26. As for the problem of induction, see Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), especially, "Introduction," xi-xxv; Chapter 1 "The Modern Fact, the Problem of Induction, and Questions of Method," 1-28; and the section on David Hume's moral philosophy, 197-213. See also Peter Dear's discussion on the problem of induction in his *Discipline & Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), especially, "Introduction: The Measure of All Things," 1-9 and Chapter 1 "Induction in Early-Modern Europe," 11-31.

27. Henry Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge, "Von Holst's History of the United Stats" *North American Review* 123 (1876): 361

Here it must be stressed strongly that Adams's choice of the thermodynamic theory depended on the *resemblance* between the movement of history and "the mechanical of action of Nature." The inverse square curve of historical acceleration resembles that of the phase change of water, he claimed, and "The resemblance is too close to be disregarded, for nature loves the logarithm, and perpetually recurs to her inverse square." Granted that there is a resemblance between the operations of the natural world and history, it is way beyond the scope of scientific discussion to identify the general course of human history only by resemblance, especially when that resemblance is not (can not be, perhaps) authenticated by any account. In Adams's scientific history, the individual — fact, event, or person — is systematically smothered and buried beneath the abstract theorization by analogy.

One important theme of Henry Adams's history writing was how to manage the problem of individual particularity. Adams didn't ally himself with the nineteenth-century Great Man theory of history; he downrated the influence of specific individuals, whether heroic or mundane, in the whole picture of history. In this connection, Timothy Paul Donovan is right in pointing out that "Adams' own *History* was obviously a depicting of a society largely at the mercy of impersonal forces which the leading statesmen of the time were powerless to control."[28] Of course, he also knew now was the age of individualism, individual freedom and responsibility that had been just realized by the late liberal revolutions, and that in the field of history writing, too, individual documentary facts were central and essential to historical objectivity. How particular each individual was, and how typical it was of an overall pattern of history — these questions constituted a subtext of Adams's history of the Jefferson and Madison eras, and the balance was always tipped toward the typical. More attention was paid to a "type" than to an individual uniqueness, and even more to impersonal "force" or thermodynamic energy as a prime mover of history. In his view, history turned out "the sequence of force."

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28. Timothy Paul Donovan, *Henry Adams and Brooks Adams: The Education of Two American Historians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961): 43.

> [B]ut he [Adams] insisted on a relation of sequence, and if he could not reach it by one method, he would try as many methods as science knew. Satisfied that the sequence of men led to nothing and that the sequence of their society could lead no further, while the mere sequence of time was artificial, and the sequence of thought was chaos, he turned at last to the sequence of force….[29]

III. The Solution and Sublimation of the Individual

History writing had not been a fixed or monolithic endeavor to represent the past, but involved a continual generic development in form and method, and by extension, a series of self-reflective questions of its own nature: what can legitimately constitute history, or more simply, what is history? As far as American history writing was concerned, it had been first and foremost a record of the divine design unfolded, as the New World settlement itself was a typological reenactment of the sacred plan. And then the late eighteenth century witnessed the secularization and humanization of history, which set itself apart from Puritan's prophetic history (and this is the main topic of the next chapter, by the way). The subsequent century was propelled by increasingly enlightened rationality, and history writing came to put more emphasis on individual facts, not on a ready-made narrative matrix. In terms of methodology, this was not just a shift in focus but a revolutionary restructuring of the discipline itself. Having ceased to be examples of a preset principle, individual historical facts now provided raw data or evidence for a new generalization. In this sense, American history writing from the early national era to the mid-nineteenth century succeeded in remodeling itself into a field of scientific analysis.

The development of history writing thus trod a path from religion to science, deduction to induction, and an *a priori* scenario to *a posteriori* individual experiences. The focus was now on individual facts as the primary factors of history, and the method centered around the way to derive general principles of historical causation from them. As Henry Adams's "failure" with scientific history shows, however, individual historical documents didn't speak a generalized law of history for themselves. The crucial point lay in the management

29. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1069.

of the individuals, or in other words, how to reconcile the uniqueness and typicalness of individual components in the overall order.[30] If one put a stress on the former, the unruly individuals would refuse to integrate themselves into a whole; and if one highlighted the latter, each individual would drown its own discrete identity in the general unity. This problem of individuality was what Adams and other nineteenth-century scientific historians confronted and failed to resolve.

For Adams, society was an organism which strictly followed the laws of nature, and social history was an organic process governed by the second law of thermodynamics. Also known as the law of dissipation or the principle of entropy, the main postulate of this scientific theory was that the intensity of energy would be lost constantly into a static equilibrium. Metaphorically speaking, the mountain is getting lower and lower, while the valley is silted up gradually to the ground level, and the world grows more and more flattened out. Adams applied this axiom to the course of human history, and predictably enough, his history took on a pessimistic hue. As history established itself as a science, its vision foretold of the inevitable end of the world, a complete stasis.

> Thus, it seemed, that whatever the universities thought or taught, the physicists regarded society as an organism in the only respect which seriously concerned historians: — it would die! If life was to disappear, the form of Vital Energy known as Social Energy, must also, presumably, go to increase the Entropy of the Universe, thus proving — at least to the degree necessary and sufficient to produce conviction in historians, — that History was a Science.[31]

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30. This issue of individuality has the same roots as what is called "the problem of induction," which also highlights the handling of the individual in the systematic organization. As for the impact of the problem of induction on the post-Enlightenment epistemology, see Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact*, and as for its implications with natural history, see Christoph Irmscher, *The Poetics of Natural History: From John Bartram to William James* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

31. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 146.

The evolutionary theory, Adams contended, offered only an illusory promise of human progress, while the thermodynamic law provided a truer perspective on history. For, "the law is already enforced in every field excepting that of human history, and even human history has not wholly escaped. In physics it rules with uncontested sway. In physiology, the old army of Evolutionists have suffered defections so serious that no discipline remains."[32] The tyranny of the thermodynamic law of dissipation was so strong that historians were unable to ignore it any longer. The problem was, if they applied it to history, it meant they had to presuppose the decomposition of the world as a necessary condition of historiography. The universal tendency toward the dissipation of energy then would end up making the world unfit for human habitation, and historians had to "define his profession as the science of human degradation."[33] It certainly would have been a scandal for right-minded society.

Ironically, thermodynamic history worked as its own undoing: "the triumph of this teaching is the ultimate degradation of the energy that is taught, — of the teacher as well as of the pupil and the universe, — and the more complete victory, the more rapid his degradation."[34] Although Adams published his idea of thermodynamic history late in his literary career, his major historical works already had been pregnant with its self-canceling effect. His history of early national American society focused upon the era when the Federalist centralization gradually lost its grip, and democratic and localist principles were rapidly pervading the country. Indeed his protagonists were outstanding national heroes, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, but they were self-abnegating champions of popular democracy, the presidents restricting their own governmental power to the minimum and ensuring the people's power as much as possible. According to Adams's theory, Jeffersonian democracy was an epitome of the dissipative tendency of history, which before long brought over Jacksonian market individualism, or in other words, the rise of the masses. The ideas of individual liberty and social equality shone brilliantly in human history and found an

32. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 154-55.

33. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 191.

34. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 204.

advocate in an equally brilliant figure like Jefferson, but the ideas themselves cancelled the very notion of brilliancy and implied a flattened-out, impersonal, and what the Federalist opponents would call, mobocratic model of society. Adams's historical accounts elaborated on this dilemma of national power in the age of distribution (or dissipation) of power. That was why he highlighted the paradoxical moments of American democracy, one of which was dramatized in Jefferson's first inaugural address, "We are all Republicans — we are all Federalists."[35] At the close of his nine-volume *History of the United States*, Adams presented such a flat, indistinct and featureless model of history as is symbolized in the metaphor of "the ocean," the universal solvent that mixes and submerges all individual particularities in itself.

> Travellers in Switzerland who stepped across the Rhine where it flowed from its glacier could follow its course among mediæval towns and feudal ruins, until it became a highway for modern industry, and at last arrived at a permanent equilibrium in the ocean. American history followed the same course. With

35. Adams repeatedly referred to this contradictory pronouncement of Jefferson's in *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson* (1889-90). The paradox drove the democratic executive power to an ideological impasse, say, on the occasion of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and here is Adams's account of the debate on it.

> Nothing could be more interesting than to see the discomfort with which the champions of the State-rights tossed themselves one horn to the other of the Federalist dilemma. The Federalists cared little on which horn their opponents might choose to impale themselves, for both were equally fatal. Either Louisiana must be admitted as a State, or must be held as territory. In the first case the old Union was at an end; in the second case the national government was an empire, with "inherent sovereignty" derived from the war and treaty-making powers, -- in either case the Virginia theories were exploded. (*History of the U.S. Admins. of Jefferson*, 379)

In his study of the early national American speech-act, Jay Fliegelman discusses the paradox of the urge of democratic self-cancellation. I am as much indebted to Fliegelman's argument in the present chapter as I have been in the previous ones. See Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, & the Culture of Performance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

> prehistoric glaciers and mediæval feudalism the story had little to do; but from the moment it came within sight of the ocean it acquired interest almost painful. A child could find his way in a river-valley, and a boy could float on the waters of Holland; but *science alone could sound the depths of the ocean, measure its currents, foretell its storms, or fix its relations to the system of Nature. In a democratic ocean science could see something ultimate. Man could go no further.* The atom might move, but the general equilibrium could not change. (Italics mine)[36]

Adams's history described the process of leveling off the original intensity of universal energy, which had been steadily scattered into the uniform "democratic ocean." It was certainly "painful," as Adams admitted, to find oneself destined to just "float" aimlessly on the even surface of that ocean. The historian himself was being subsumed and dissipated under the indefinite, merciless masses. The impersonal law of history alone could see history to its final stasis; "Man could go no further."

In Adams's scheme, the individual turned out to be a typical unit that didn't have any tangible token of uniqueness. That uniqueness or difference was the very embodiment of intensive energy that, according to Adams, had been dissipated in the course of democratization. What concerned him most was the typicality of the individual, because "The scientific interest of American history centered in national character, and in the workings of a society destined to become vast, in which individuals were important chiefly as types."[37] Adams knew some assumed heroes as the prime movers of history, but even then great men mattered only as the representatives of the national character, not as their own singular selves.

> Whether the scientific or the heroic view were taken, in either case the starting-point was the same, and chief object of interest was to define national character. Whether the figures of history were treated as heroes or as types, they must be taken to

36. Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of James Madison,* 1335.

37. Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of James Madison,* 1332.

> represent the people. American types were especially worth study if they were to represent the greatest democratic evolution the world could know…. For that reason, in the story of Jefferson individuals retained their old interest as types of character, if not as sources of power.[38]

"Type" was one of the most recurrent terms in *The Education of Henry Adams*, too. It was a story of education "but in type."[39] Coming across different individuals, Adams always recognized them as the types of their respective groups, and that way he learned how society worked: "what struck boys most was their type. Senators were a species; they all wore an air, as they wore a blue dress coat or brass buttons; they were Roman"; "The Southern type was one to be avoided; the New England type was one's self," and many other similar instances punctuated the entire book.[40] And these types were, Adams claimed, products of "force," as "their attitude was a law of nature; their judgment beyond appeal, not an act either of intellect or emotion or of will, but a sort of gravitation."[41] Hence his conclusion: human history as the unfolding of the universal force.

> Modern politics is, at bottom, a struggle not of men but of forces. The men become every year more and more creatures of force, massed about central power-houses. The conflict is no longer between the men, but between the motors that drive the men, and the men tend to succumb to their own motive forces.[42]

The individual left behind, the type replaced it. And now the even more abstract and indistinct force set in to drive human history forward.

What was lost in the modern scientification of history was the "face" of history. In

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38. Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of James Madison,* 1335.
39. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 753.
40. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 761, 811-12.
41. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 771.
42. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1105.

Puritan prophetic history, the individuals were faceless and anonymous as well, for sure, but at least it was marked with the Godhead, written in the name of God. As enlightened rationality spread over, the divine agent was expelled out of the field of human history, and heroic individuals were throned as its new faces. And finally in the era of empirical science and democratic leveling, great men also gave up their controlling power, and it was the common everyman in turn that steered the course of history, while its workings were explained in terms of the impersonal and merciless laws of nature. Now history lost its actor's name or face completely; anonymity and impersonality dominated over it.

> In short, the social Organism, in the recent views of history, is the cause, creator, and end of the Man, who exists only as a passing representative of it, without rights or functions except what it imposes. As an Organism society has always been peculiarly subject to Degradation of Energy, and alike the historians and the physicists invariably stretch Kelvin's law over the all organized matter whatever.[43]

In the most scientific form of history, the individual had nothing specific and unique to oneself, but was only a single unit of the "social Organism."

Paradoxically or perhaps naturally, Adams's theory of scientific history grew more and more erratic and metaphysical as he edged toward its logical conclusion. The world's energy would be dissipated slowly but steadily, and the day would come when everything stops and motion itself ends. Then, in his vision, there would arrive the ultimate serenity of all-leveling solution. "This solvent, then, — this ultimate motion which absorbs all other forms of motion is an ultimate equilibrium, — this ethereal current of Thought, — is conceived as existing, like ice on a mountain range, and trickling from every pore of rock, in innumerable rills, uniting always into larger channels, and always dissolving whatever it meets, until at last it reaches equilibrium in the ocean of ultimate solution."[44] Here employing Josiah Willard Gibbs's rule of phase as well as the law of entropy, Adams contended that the course

43. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 256.

44. Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 275.

of human history corresponded exactly with the phase changes of matter.

Material Phase Change

The *Solid* → The *Fluid* → *Vapor*, or gas → The Electron, or *Electricity* → The *Ether* → *Space* → Hyper-space, knowable only as Hypert-hought, or pure mathematics

Historical Phase Change

Religious (90,000 yrs.) → Mechanical (300 yrs., 1600-1900) → Electric (17.5 yrs., 1900-1917) → Ethereal (4 yrs., 1917-1921)[45]

As the entropy of the universe increases, it will grow more and more pure, tranquil, and ideal. Let us go back to the diagram at the beginning of the chapter, which shows the acceleration rate of the historical phase change. The earliest days of human history stretched over ninety thousand years under the reign of religion, while the next phase, the mechanical era, lasted only for three hundred years, and the electric era, for seventeen years and a half and the ethereal one, for four years, regularly speeding up at the rate of square root. The next period of "Space" would summarily end two years after it begins in 1921, and the final phase, that of "Hyper-space" will follow. The end of history.

One may well ask, what is the world of "Hyper-thought"? The "ethereal current of Thought" which dissolves "whatever it meets, until at last it reaches equilibrium in the ocean of ultimate solution"? Adams thought that it was the master "solution" to the problems of human history, but the whole discussion is something other than history and gives no suggestion what it exactly is. The revival of metaphysics or apocalyptic kingdom come after all the rigid adherence to physical science is simply amazing. The scientific aspiration of history had been motivated by its overt desire to break away from the typological worldview, and now at last far removed from religious dogma, human history again submitted itself to a much more impersonal and metaphysical abstraction.

45. See Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, 268-70 and 280-302.

IV. Open Endings

Perhaps, there is a resemblance between the principle of entropy and the course of human history. The analogy, however, is a forced one. Under any circumstances, each individual is different from the other, and however infinitesimal and trifle it looks, the difference is a difference, never completely flattened out into a smooth uniform surface. Jefferson and Napoleon represented their contemporary people and societies, and as representative types alone, Adams proclaimed, they were historically valuable. In his narrative, however, he portrayed the historic figures as definite characters, and their personalities were in no manner to be contained in an abstract law of history. For, the individual can be typical and unique all at once, and its duality gives rise to diversity, complexity, and unpredictability in history.

Adams himself should have known this, when he prepared an open ending for the close of *History of the United States*. The closing paragraph comprised a train of questions without any suggestions for their possible answers.

> They [the American people] were intelligent, but what paths would their intelligence select? They were quick, but what solution of insoluble problems would quickness hurry? They were scientific, and what control would their science exercise over their destiny? They were mild, but what corruptions would their relaxations bring? They were peaceful, but by what machinery were their corruptions purged? What interests were to vivify a society so vast and uniform? What ideals were to ennoble it? What object, besides physical content, must a democratic continent aspire to attain? For the treatment of such questions, history required another century of experience. (*History Second Admin. of Madison*, 1345)

With the thermodynamic law of history, he could have offered the solution to these questions, but as it was, he did not. The open ending testifies that he was not so sure of his abstract and impersonal theory as he elsewhere was; he must have realized that it did not make any practical sense to impose it onto the real-life world.

Since the failure of Adams's thermodynamic history, the search for the universal laws of history had been virtually abandoned except for a few fitful cases of advocacy of historical objectivity.[46] The trend in history writing instead grew more and more relativistic and pragmatic, with its focus set on particular and local conditions. James Harvey Robinson, Carl Becker, and Charles A. Beard, among others, aggressively challenged the cult of "neutral, value-free history."[47] In his highly influential essay, "That Noble Dream," Beard denounced the purely experiential method of nineteenth-century scientific history, and insisted on the interpretive aspects of every history writing: "The events and personalities of history in their very nature involve ethical and aesthetic considerations. They are not mere events in physics and chemistry inviting neutrality on the part of the 'observer.'"[48] Just around the same time, José Ortega y Gasset also shared the same concern with the North American cohorts, and presented his idea of vitalist history as an antithesis to physicist history. Man, according to Ortega, was not a thing embedded in a necessary chain of scientific causation, but "an aspiration, the aspiration to be this or that."[49] Instead of "physico-mathematical reason," which was impotent against the supremely free and exuberant agency of each individual, he stuck to "narrative reason" so as to restore individual dramas to historical studies.[50] After all, there is no absolute truth of history, but

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46. Edward P. Cheyney, "Law in History," *The American Historical Review* 29. 2 (January 1924): 231-48; Theodore Clarke Smith, "The Writing of American History in America, from 1884 to 1934," *The American Historical Review* 40. 3 (April 1935):439-449.

47. Charles A. Beard, "That Noble Dream," *The American Historical Review* 41. 1 (October 1935): 80. As for the pragmatic vein of the twentieth-century American historiography, see Cushing Strout, *The Pragmatic Revolt in American History: Carl Becker and Charles Beard* (1958; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966).

48. Beard, "That Noble Dream," 83. See also Beard, "Written History as an Act of Faith," *The American Historical Review* 39. 2 (January 1934): 219-31.

49. José Ortega y Gasset, *History as a System and Other Essays toward a Philosophy of History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962): 113.

50. Ortega, *History as a System*, 214. Admittedly, Ortega's historical vitalism has its own problem. In his schematization, the original voluntary impulse of human history is often lost sight of in modern times, and people reduce themselves to the unmotivated masses. No matter how earnestly he

versions of historical narratives and interpretations, which are not mutually exclusive, but open to each other.[51]

The development of modern historiography has been taking place between individualist and collectivist, personal and impersonal, narrative and scientific, or vitalist and necessitarian views of human affairs. Around the dawn of the twentieth century, the "noble dream" of scientific history came to an impasse with Henry Adams's physicist history. The later generations now favor narrative history, as is exemplified in works by Natalie Zemon Davis, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, James Goodman, and Simon Schama to name a few.[52] Indeed

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advocated vitalist history, or rather because he did so with all the more intensity, it always sounded like an elitist's jeremiad. He could superbly theorize the mechanism of what he termed the masses, but in actuality, wouldn't delve deep into them, just as Adams explained them away as the impersonal units of the social organism. It was yet to be doubted how seriously he oriented himself toward the people's drama.

51. Edward Hallett Carr's famous lecture series, *What Is History?*, recapitulates these shifts of focus in the twentieth-century climate of historical writing, from an impersonal and mechanical chain of causes and effects to the subjective aspects of human activities, including historical writing itself. Along with Hayden White's schematization of historical narratives as rhetorical constructs, twentieth-century historiography increasingly diverts itself from Rankean "what actually happened" onto how it is narrated or, from the content of history to its authorial, social, and political context. Historians were, or even had to be, invisible in the scientific representation of the past, but they now acknowledges themselves responsible for plotting a story after his own method and art. See Carr, *What Is History?*, and White, *Metahistory*.

52. As for narrative history, see James West Davidson, "The New Narrative History: How New? How Narrative?" *Reviews in American History* 12 (September 1984): 322-34; James Goodman, "For the Love of Stories," *Reviews in American History* 26 (March 1998): 255-74, and "Telling the Stories of Narrative History" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 44 (August 14, 1998): B4-5. The major contemporary practices of narrative history I consulted are: Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences* (1965; New York: Vintage Books, 1993); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990); James Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties* (1991; New York: Vintage Books, 1992); D. Graham Burnett, *A Trial by Jury* (New York : A.A. Knopf, 2001).

the thermodynamic vision of history was an intellectual anomaly, but it is important to remember that people once used to explain the course of history in strict accordance with scientific laws and that historians may possibly revert to the passion for science in the future. The history of history writing will perpetuate itself coming back and forth between the two ends of historical consciousness. The dilemma of free will and determinism has been and will remain to be a historian's chief anxiety.

Part II

Nature of American History

Chapter Four

Natural History Turned National History: Unity and Uniqueness in Jeremy Belknap's Federalist Historiography

I. The Third Volume of *The History of New-Hampshire*

When we examine American historical writings in the post-Revolutionary era, a certain generic feature presents itself. That is, the intermixture of chronological narratives and natural historical descriptions. Jedidiah Morse's *The American Geography* (1789), for instance, was a book of the American terrain as the title plainly shows, but Morse allotted quite a few pages to historical accounts of the newly independent nation-state, just as well as to natural historical descriptions of its animals, vegetables, and minerals. The 1793 enlarged edition, *The American Universal Geography,* was still more predominantly historical, as Myra Jehlen referred to it as "the first overall history published in this country."[1] The combination of natural history and national history further characterized his another publication, *The History of America* (1790). The title again belied its content, about half of which was given over to geographical and natural historical descriptions of each state. For Morse, there was no clear line between history writing and natural historical recording. They were inseparable or even interchangeable with each other.

This was totally the case with Jeremy Belknap's historical writings. The first two volumes of his *The History of New-Hampshire* (1784-92) traced the chronological course of events from the settlement of New Hampshire to the period of national independence, while Belknap appended the full-length third volume to the historical narrative, with this explanatory title, "Containing a Geographical Description of the State; with Sketches of Its Natural History, Productions, Improvements, and Present State of Society and Manners, Laws and Government." What made Belknap set about this third volume of natural historical sketches, even as a part of the ostensibly historical text? And how can we take this curious combination of natural history and national history? Predictably enough, *The History*

1. Myra Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986): 6.

of New-Hampshire has been criticized for its formal discrepancy between the first two volumes and the last third one. Although the third volume has been much evaluated as an exhaustive collection of factual data and statistics of early New Hampshire, often compared with another contemporary natural history text, Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1784), yet critics have considered it to be an independent, if not wholly redundant, segment of the series. The trilogy has never been discussed in its totality due to its alleged lack of methodological unity.[2] Nonetheless, the generic mixture or apparent dissonance of

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2. See Leonard Tucker, *Clio's Consort: Jeremy Belknap and the Foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1990): 36-37; Russell M. Lawson, *The American Plutarch: Jeremy Belknap and the Historian's Dialogue with the Past* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998): 54-55; George B. Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap: A Biography* (New York: Arno Press, 1982): 152-56; and Sydney Kaplan, "*The History of New-Hampshire*: Jeremy Belknap as Literary Craftsman," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 21.1 (January 1964): 36.

As for general assessments of Belknap's works, Tucker's *Clio's Consort*, Lawson's *American Plutarch*, and Kirsch's *Jeremy Belknap* are best to be consulted. Other than these books, see also John Spencer Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917): 24-43; Michael Kraus, *A History of American History* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937): 134-140; and Michael Kraus, *The Writing of American History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953): 73-76. All in all, Belknap has been acclaimed for his assiduous document collecting and penchant for historical objectivity. Lawrence Buell referred to *The History of New-Hampshire* as the best distinguished in its day, and "none yet quite superseded." See Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 195. Alexis de Tocqueville maintains that "Jeremy Belknap's *History of New-Hampshire*, 2 vols. in octavo, printed in Boston in 1792, is rightly held in high esteem.… Readers will find in Belknap more general ideas and more forceful thinking than in any other American historian to date." See Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835-40; New York: The Library of America, 2004): 849.

As for the contemporaneous reception and sales, see Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 37-38 and Kirsch, Jeremy Belknap, 125-28. Despite its modest sales, it must be admitted that *The History of New-Hampshire*, along with Jeffeson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, blazed a path for a number of regional histories that followed, such as Samuel William's *Natural and Civil History of Vermont* (1794), James Sullivan's *History of the District of Maine* (1795), Robert Proud's *History of Pennsylvania* (1797-98), Ira Allen's *Natural and Civil History of the State of Vermont* (1798), and George Minot's *Continuation of the History of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (1798).

natural historical cataloging and historical narrative doesn't mean that Belknap's books — or for that matter, the late-eighteenth-century American historical writings in general — were particularly immature as a literary craft. Judging from its later developments, the combination of those two representational modes rather constituted an essential part of American history writing, at least up to the mid-nineteenth century.

The purpose of this chapter is then to illustrate the strong affinity between natural history and American history writing, as is shown in Belknap's historical texts. In the course of our discussion, the combination of natural history and national history will be contextualized against a contemporary social backdrop, *i.e.* the arguments on the federal system of the centralized government. Natural history, history writing, and the Federalist contention — these might seem widely different from each other at first glance, but they actually shared a common concern about "the individual," or to be exact, the uniqueness and typicalness of individual components in the overall systematization. Whether in natural history, national history, or the federal government system, late-eighteenth-century America witnessed the great rise of the individual (individual natural objects, individual archival data, and individual states and citizens), who/which newly turned out to be prime movers, as well as fundamental constituents, of the world. Belknap's concern about the individual provided a focal point for natural history, national history and the contemporary arguments on Federalism at once.

II. Natural History Turned National History

Belknap served as a Congregational pastor in Dover, New Hampshire, from 1767 to 1787, more than one third of his rather short life (he died fifty five years old), and, while there, started his historical research, which would later be crystalized into the publication of the state history.[3] It was after he returned to natal Boston, however, that he produced significant achievements as a leading historian of the day: the completion of *The History of New-Hampshire* in 1792, the publication of *The Foresters* (serialized in the Philadelphia *Columbian*

3. See Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 28; Lawson, *The American Plutarch*, 41-55; and Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 115.

Magazine from June 1787 to April 1788 and published in book form in 1792) and *American Biography* (vol. 1 in 1794 and vol. 2 posthumously in 1798), and the foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1791.

Belknap's history writing presented two distinct features. The one was its undeviating espousal of enlightened rationality, which ran straight along the keel of all his writings. *The History of New-Hampshire* began with the celebration of "rational and active powers" to which he ascribed the origin of the nation. "It is happy for America," he extolled, "that its discovery and settlement by the Europeans happened at a time, when they were emerging from a long period of ignorance and darkness. The discovery of the magnetic needle, the invention of printing, the revival of literature and the reformation of religion, had caused a vast alteration in their views, and taught them the true use of their rational and active powers. To this concurrence of favourable causes we are indebted for the precision with which we are able to fix the beginning of this great American empire."[4] Here one cannot miss the nationalistic tone, which indeed reverberated throughout Belknap's volumes.[5] More than anything else, however, this first paragraph of *The History of New-Hampshire* was the author's declaration that he stuck fast to the rational treatment of historical events in his text. If America had been the country of rationality, its history must have exemplified rational logic.

No surprise, then, Belknap flatly denounced the superstitious way of Puritan historians in their renderings of the past. For him, Puritan histories, especially those of the Mathers and William Hubbard, were nothing but records of irrational credulity, and he insisted that his

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4. Jeremy Belknap, *The History of New-Hampshire,* vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author by Robert Aitken, 1784): 1. The second volume was published in Boston by Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1791, and the third one, in Boston by Belknap and Young, 1792. All subsequent citations from this series are marked with its abbreviated title, *HN*, volume numbers, and page numbers in parentheses.

5. As for the nationalistic turn in Belknap's historiography, see Charles William Cole, "Jeremy Belknap: Pioneer Nationalist," *The New England Quarterly* 10.4 (December 1937): 743-51; Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 30-32; and Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 48-70.

own historical account was totally different from them.[6]

> Our gravest historians have recorded many omens, predictions, and other alarming circumstances, during this and the Pequod war, which in a more philosophical and less credulous age would not be worthy of notice. When men's minds were rendered gloomy by the horrors of a surrounding wilderness, and the continual apprehension of danger from its savage inhabitants; when they were ignorant of the causes of many of the common appearances in nature, and were disposed to resolve every unusual appearance into prodigy and miracle, it is not to be wondered that they should imagine they heard the noise of drums and guns in the air, and saw flaming swords and spears in the heavens, and should even interpret eclipses as omninous [*sic*]. (*HN*, 1: 162-63)

As a man of God, to be sure, Belknap performed his clerical duties well in accordance with the fundamental belief in divine providence, sporadically invoking divine aid in his essays and sermons, as well as in his historical writings themselves. Immediately before the last cited passage, for example, he wrote, "It ought ever to be remembered for the honor of New England, that as their first settlement, so their preservation, increase, and defence, even in

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6. Belknap sometimes taunted Puritan histories in his letters to Ebenezer Hazard. He at one time wrote to Hazard, "I wish you was here to laugh with me at Dr. Mather's 'Wonders of the Invisible World,' which I have taken out of the [Harvard] College Library." On another occasion, he took up a piece of Mather's work even to comment "if there were *no fools*, there would be *no witchcraft*." See *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 2 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1877): 198, 205. As for the mock treatment of Puritan ancestry through the early national to antebellum periods, see Buell, *New England Literary Culture*, 193-238.

Belknap's anti-Puritan attitude is made manifest, for example, in his descriptions of colonial theocracy, whose "principle of intolerancy was rooted in the minds of our forefathers. Had it stood only in their books as a subject of speculation, it might have been excused, considering the prejudices of the times; but it was drawn out into fatal practice, and caused severe persecutions which cannot be justified consistently with christianity or true policy." (*HN,* I: 88). See also Kaplan, "*The History of New-Hampshire*: Jeremy Belknap as Literary Craftsman,"34-35.

their weakest infancy were not owing to any foreign assistance, but under God, to their own magnanimity and perseverance" (*HN*, 1: 162). And yet, he really decided that the historical course of events had to be understood as, to use his phraseology, "history of man," not a province of "sacred history," let alone "prodigy and miracle."[7] The prime mover of history was the man himself, and its dynamics followed the path of rational causality, not the whimsy of deus ex machina. Even our faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, he once claimed, had to be "supported by proper [historical] evidence."[8]

Every serious rationalization involved the production of tons of evidence. The second feature of Belknap's history writing was its obsessive collection of documentary evidence,

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7. Jeremy Belknap, *A Discourse, Intended to Commemorate the Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus; Delivered at the Request of the Historical Society in Massachusetts, on the 23d Day of October, 1792, Being the Completion of the Third Century since That Memorable Event* (Boston: Belknap and Hall, 1792): 36.

8. Jeremy Belknap, *Dissertations on the Character, Death & Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Evidence of His Gospel; with Remarks on Some Sentiments Advanced in a book Intitled "*The Age of Reason*"* (Boston: The Apollo Press, 1795): 13. In this essay, Belknap tries to verify the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, applying the method of source criticism for the New Testament, which he presents as a collection of eye-witness testimonies of Christ's miracles.

Belknap's liberal rationalism is one of the most featured topics in his biographies. See Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, especially 3-4, 11-17, 39-40; Lawson, *The American Plutarch,* 28-39.

Although George B. Kirsch states Belknap was "still more a child of the Age of Faith than the Age of Enlightenment," his rhetoric in *Dissertations on the Character, Death & Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Evidence of His Gospel* was obviously the product of scientific rationalism, especially when he discussed the credibility of the gospel as historical evidence. He didn't go so far as to be an outright Deist or religious freethinker — in actuality, the above essay was written partly as a refutation of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* —, but he stood farthest from blind faith, making the most of logical reason and methodic doubt, even if it ended up in a belief in the first cause of the universe, God. In this regard, I would rather agree with Louis Leonard Tucker, who even claims Belknap "was miscast as a minister. His primary interest was in secular matters of the mind, not theology or servicing the spiritual needs of parishioners. His natural habitat was the study, not the pulpit." In spite of the above-cited remark, moreover, Kirsch also points out the shift in Belknap's religious thought from strict Calvinist views to liberal Arminian theology, and humanitarian rationalism in his historiography. See Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 22-43, 119-25 and Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 11.

including both major ones and those of mundane triviality. How meticulous his descriptions sometimes tended to be, one can tell by going over a couple of random samples taken from his books. Concerning the battle between the rival colonial forces for the capture of Cape Breton (1744-48), Belknap first focused on the island of Cape Breton itself, saying "before we open this romantic and hazardous scene, it is necessary to give some account of the place which was to be the theatre of operations" (*HN*, 2: 191). He then started with locating the island on the cartographic grid, determining its dimension and shape, and rating the quality of its soil, and went on to dilate upon the timeline of the building of the fortress, Louisbourg (*HN*, 2: 191-96). Of course, it might be quite reasonable to go into such details as a preamble to the historical narrative itself, even if it looked a bit too drawn-out. In Belknap's writings, however, the same descriptive detailedness still prevailed over the historical accounts that followed, enumerating a number of (hyper-)local and erratic incidents one by one. The New Hampshire troops, he at one point noted, were particularly willing to partake "of all the labors and dangers of the siege [of Louisbourg]. They were employed for fourteen nights successively, in drawing cannon from the landing place to the camp, through a morass," and then the anecdote of their struggle with the mire ensued with details, although it had been "not more distinctly acknowledged" in a published account. (*HN*, 2: 217-18). Along with equally obscure stories coming up one after another, these episodes certainly were of historical import on their own, giving lively accounts of the battle, but judging from the viewpoint of narrative wholeness, they were rather digressions from the proper order of events, interrupting and encumbering the easy flow of the story time and again.[9]

Belknap's descriptive detailedness and digressiveness culminated just after the scene of the capture of Louisbourg. Until then he concentrated on the battle over Cape Breton, but suddenly, and even in the very middle of the chapter, he swerved away to "the state of the frontiers" and began to elaborate on the conflicts between the white settlers and the Indians

9. Besides the scenes of warfare between the rival colonial forces, Belknap's text especially abounds with anecdotes of Indian captivity. They are also lively and even touching accounts of the colonial lives, but again, the same excessive particularity undermines the structural unity. See Kaplan, "*The History of New-Hampshire*: Jeremy Belknap as Literary Craftsman," 18-39.

(*HN*, 2: 235). This abrupt transition alone is amazing enough, and even more so is Belknap's obsession for trivialities. Here is an example: "a party of twelve Indians," he maintained, "approached the fort at Great Meadow, and took Nehemiah How, who was at a little distance from the fort, cutting wood…. As they were leading him away, by the side of the river, they espied a canoe coming down, with two men, at whom they fired, and killed David Rugg; but Robert Baker got to the opposite shore and escaped" (*HN*, 2: 241). And then followed a string of short paragraphs on the struggles of obscure backwoods people, which ultimately added up to a 16-page-long meticulous account of the frontier skirmishes.

Belknap cataloged the individual names of the frontiersmen as if they constituted a legitimate part of his history, but nobody knows (or cares) who "Nehemiah How," "David Rugg," or "Robert Baker" was exactly, and we are perplexed with the clueless list of nondescript people. Although we acknowledge the lives of obscure common men are as important as the grand history of the New England colonies, these episodes are still too trifle to make any sense and never add up to a coherent narrative. Belknap once criticized his rival historian, William Gordon's *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment, of the Independence of the United States of America* (1788): "There is a great collection of matter, in Gordon's work; but there are many things which are below the dignity of history to notice. Of what consequence is it that General Sullivan lived upon salted tongues and eggs in his Indian expedition? or that General Jo Warren was thought handsome by the ladies?"[10] Belknap was proud of his own ever-expanding inventory of historical facts, which befitted "the dignity of history," to be sure. Maybe he was right (one can rightfully claim the death roll of the frontier strife is more important than General Sullivan's diet), but the crucial point didn't lie in the quality of accumulated facts, but in the management of them. In Belknap's text, each piece of historical data was presented as it was *per se*, not meaningfully contextualized in the general course of history.

This sort of patchy detailedness best epitomized the natural historical nature of Belknap's history writing. The third volume of *The History of New-Hampshire* was all about

10. Belknap to Hazard, July 18, 1789, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 3 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1882): 151-52.

the state's natural history, filled with a variety of empirical data on geography, flora and fauna, and mineralogy, as well as on the customs and manners of the inhabitants. In fact, a significant part of its description derived from his own natural history expedition to the White Mountains in 1784.[11] Consider, for instance, the section of American birds in Volume III, which alternated between cataloging and sketching the avian families without any pretension to holistic perspective, as was the case with typical natural history writings (Figure 3).[12] The main point lay in listing as many species as could be collected, and all we can know from this is, these birds certainly existed somewhere in New Hampshire, just as there used to live people named "Nehemiah How," "David Rugg," or "Robert Baker" in the frontier.

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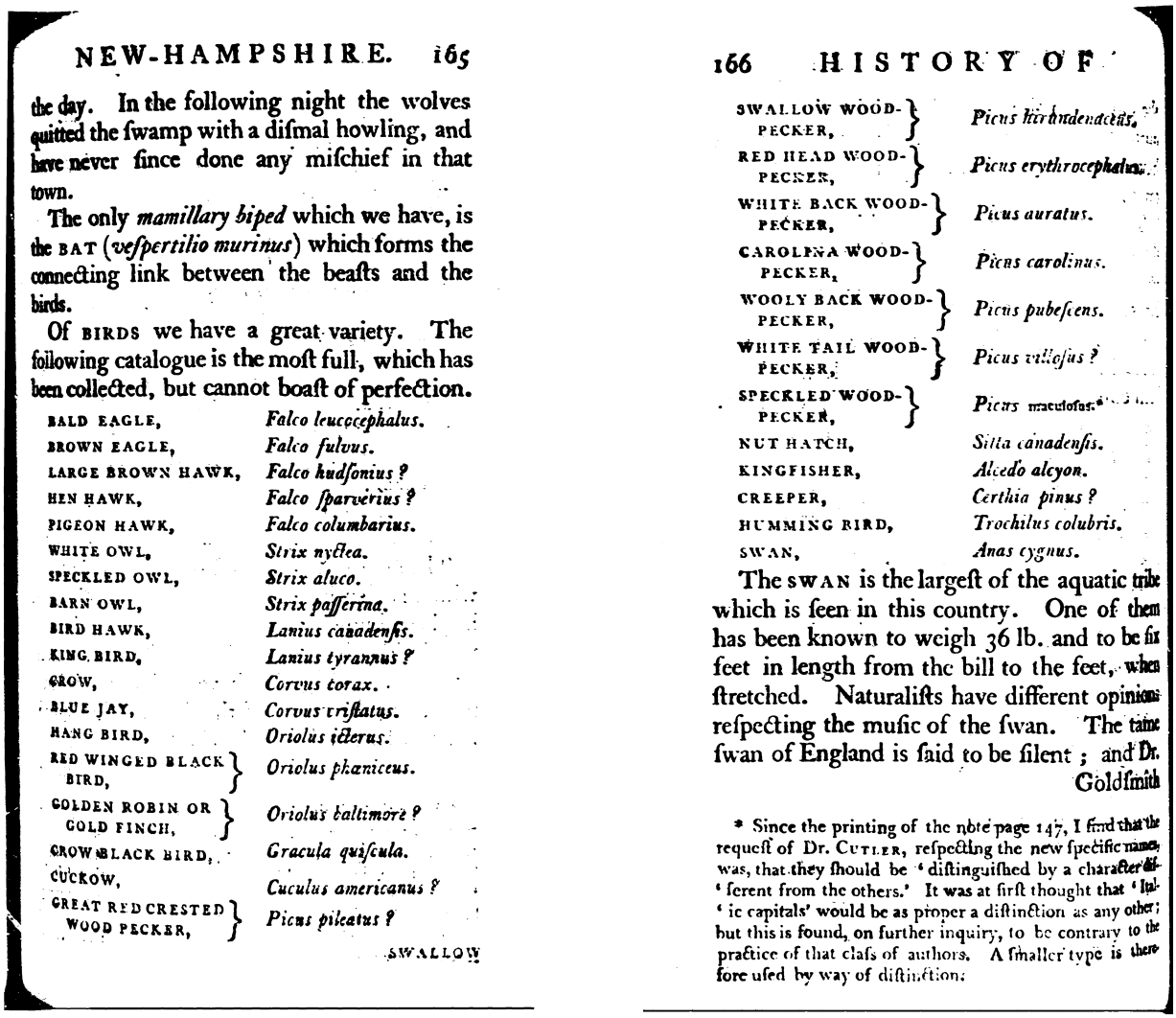
11. For a detailed account of this expedition, see Lawson, *The American Plutarch*, 69-100. Belknap's curiosity was not limited within historiography, but he was deeply involved with natural scientific pursuits. He attended John Winthrop's course in natural philosophy at Harvard, which was his first formal scientific training. After he entered the clerical profession, he frequently recorded his observations of the natural world, both terrestrial and celestial. See Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 147-73.

12. The grammar of natural history consisted of "the list, the chart, the label," and its only conceptual framework was the idea of "the Great Chain of Being," although it was an absolutely static worldview, not allowing the tableau of the natural world to be more than the aggregate of its parts. As for the grammar and rhetoric of natural history, see Pamela Regis, *Describing Early America: Bartram, Jefferson, Crèvecœur and the Influence of Natural History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), and as for the idea of "the Great Chain of Being," it is always rewarding to consult Arthur O. Lovejoy's classic study, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936).

Regis points out that the descriptive and cataloging rhetoric of natural history removes the object out of the narrative context, and thereby represents it as the Other fixed in an atemporal tableau. This Othering effect turns problematic particularly in the portrayal of American Indians. I am greatly indebted to Regis's analysis of the rhetoric of natural history, but my chief focus is not just on the decontextualization of natural history, but its spatializing and visualizing effect on contemporary historiography.



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the day. In the following night the wolves quitted the ſwamp with a diſmal howling, and have never ſince done any miſchief in that town.

The only *mamillary biped* which we have, is the BAT (*veſpertilio murinus*) which forms the connecting link between the beaſts and the birds.

Of BIRDS we have a great variety. The following catalogue is the moſt full, which has been collected, but cannot boaſt of perfection.

BALD EAGLE,	*Falco leucocephalus.*
BROWN EAGLE,	*Falco fulvus.*
LARGE BROWN HAWK,	*Falco hudſonius?*
HEN HAWK,	*Falco ſparverius?*
PIGEON HAWK,	*Falco columbarius.*
WHITE OWL,	*Strix nyctea.*
SPECKLED OWL,	*Strix aluco.*
BARN OWL,	*Strix paſſerina.*
BIRD HAWK,	*Lanius canadenſis.*
KING BIRD,	*Lanius tyrannus?*
CROW,	*Corvus corax.*
BLUE JAY,	*Corvus criſtatus.*
HANG BIRD,	*Oriolus icterus.*
RED WINGED BLACK BIRD,	*Oriolus phœniceus.*
GOLDEN ROBIN OR GOLD FINCH,	*Oriolus baltimore?*
CROW BLACK BIRD,	*Gracula quiſcula.*
CUCKOW,	*Cuculus americanus?*
GREAT RED CRESTED WOOD PECKER,	*Picus pileatus?*

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SWALLOW WOOD-PECKER,	*Picus hirundinaceus.*
RED HEAD WOOD-PECKER,	*Picus erythrocephalus.*
WHITE BACK WOOD-PECKER,	*Picus auratus.*
CAROLINA WOOD-PECKER,	*Picus carolinus.*
WOOLY BACK WOOD-PECKER,	*Picus pubeſcens.*
WHITE TAIL WOOD-PECKER,	*Picus villoſus?*
SPECKLED WOOD-PECKER,	*Picus maculoſus.**
NUT HATCH,	*Sitta canadenſis.*
KINGFISHER,	*Alcedo alcyon.*
CREEPER,	*Certhia pinus?*
HUMMING BIRD,	*Trochilus colubris.*
SWAN,	*Anas cygnus.*

The SWAN is the largeſt of the aquatic tribe which is ſeen in this country. One of them has been known to weigh 36 lb. and to be ſix feet in length from the bill to the feet, when ſtretched. Naturaliſts have different opinions reſpecting the muſic of the ſwan. The tame ſwan of England is ſaid to be ſilent; and Dr. Goldſmith

* Since the printing of the note page 147, I find that the requeſt of Dr. CUTLER, reſpecting the new ſpecific names, was, that they ſhould be 'diſtinguiſhed by a character dif-'ferent from the others.' It was at firſt thought that 'Ital-'ic capitals' would be as proper a diſtinction as any other; but this is found, on further inquiry, to be contrary to the practice of that claſs of authors. A ſmaller type is there-fore uſed by way of diſtinction.

Figure 3: Of Birds in New Hampshire (Jeremy Belknap, *The History of New-Hampshire*, vol. 3)

Natural history loves details. As Carl Linnaeus, the patriarch of the discipline, once asserted, "the study of natural history, simple, beautiful, and instructive, consists in the collection, arrangement, and exhibition of the various productions of the earth."[13] As regards the extent of variety, we can surmise from Belknap's book-length catalog of New Hampshire nature, or still better, just think "however large a portion of [works of nature] lies open to our present view; a still greater part is yet unknown and undiscovered."[14] Every single

13. Carl Linnaeus, *A General System of Nature, through the Three Grand Kingdoms of Animal, Vegetables, and Minerals, Systematically Divided into Their Several Classes, Orders, Genera, Species, and Varieties, with Their Habitations, Manners, Economy, Structure, and Peculiarities*, trans., William Turton, M. D. (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1806): 2.

14. Linnaeus, *A General System of Nature*, 1.

natural object was of equal significance (God resides in the details), so natural historical inquiry involved particularly minute and detailed examination into the nooks and crannies of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. Hence a plethora of data and specimens overflowing natural history texts, as in the third volume of *The History of New-Hampshire*.[15] And, as we have seen, the same went for the first and second volumes of historical narrative, too. The meticulous list of natural objects in the third volume perfectly corresponded with the catalog of detailed and digressive episodes crammed in the first two. The third volume has been regarded as totally different from the other volumes both in content and form, but if we look closer enough, it is clear that the whole series was compiled exactly in the same method. Belknap the historian would heartily agree with Charles Willson Peale the natural historian, who wrote in his autobiography, "it is the detail alone that enchants us and contributes to our amusement. And the wonderful variety that may be collected from different countries and climates, if properly exhibited, not only amuse, but also exalt the mind to an adoration of the great first cause."[16]

The natural historical passion for details was not unique to Belknap, but widely shared with his other contemporary writers of Americana. The most notable one was Thomas Jefferson, whose obsessively loaded *Notes on the State of Virginia* was one of its most exemplary achievements, and other writers also featured the wealth of American nature to write the newly independent (*i.e.* unstoried, devoid-of-history) nation-state into existence. According to Pamela Regis, the second half of the eighteenth century saw the full blossoming of the science of natural history, which provided a wieldy method of Linnaean nomenclature for American writers to describe and understand their land, and helped create

15. As for the detailedness and uncontainable expansion of natural historical collection, see Christoph Irmscher, *The Poetics of Natural History: From John Bartram to William James* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), especially Chapter 2 on Charles Willson Peale's collection and Chapter 3 on P. T. Barnum's American Museum.

16. Charles Willson Peale, *The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (*The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, vol. 5) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000): 132.

a genre called "the literature of place."[17] Of course, America was nothing if not a political entity, with such a set of political ideas as were articulated in the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, or the Constitution itself; but America also found in natural history another way of self-definition and self-creation, which was achieved through enumerating and sketching the natural objects of the continent, and thereby making America intelligible to the rest of the world.[18] Under the circumstances, then, it wouldn't be surprising if American history writing, yet another practice of self-definition, sought a guiding light in the contemporary natural historical enterprises.

In fact, while eighteenth-century natural history nurtured the ambition for completeness and produced a number of bulky tomes,[19] contemporary history writing also aspired to the same completeness and exhaustiveness in document hunting. The inception of extensive archival activities, including Belknap's own foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society among others, attested to it, and the will to completeness lingered well into the nineteenth-century practice of documentary history. Speaking of historiographical completeness, it is worth while noting in this context that Belknap's aborted project of *American Biography* was taken over by another exhaustive documentary historian, Jared Sparks, in his *The Library of American Biography.* Just as Belknap's *American Biography* was meant to be so comprehensive as to encompass anything American in it — the first volume

17. As other representative texts of the literature of place, Pamela Regis named J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), William Bartram's *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws: Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of Those Regions; Together with Observations of the Manners of the Indians* (1790), and other colonial travel writings. See Regis, *Describing Early America*, 3-39.

18. See Regis, *Describing Early America*, 3-5. According to Patricia Cline Cohen, the late-colonial and revolutionary Americans learned to grasp the world by "eagerly counting, measuring, and churning out data," and their interest was more and more inclined toward statistically minute and specific knowledge. No doubt this also contributed to foster descriptive detailedness in eighteenth-century American historiography. See Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (New York: Routledge, 1999). The last quotation is from page 4 of this book.

19. Irmscher, *The Poetics of Natural History*, 102.

started with "a preliminary dissertation" on the ancient Phoenician colonization, the earliest possible attempt at the New World discovery and settlement[20] —, so Sparks's plan of *The Library of American Biography* was to embrace "the lives of all persons, who have been distinguished in America, from the date of its first discovery to the present time. Such a scheme, if faithfully carried through, on the scale here assumed, would embrace a perfect history of the country, of its social and political progress, its arts, sciences, literature, and improvements of every kind."[21] While Belknap's series hadn't gone beyond a couple of publications, Sparks fulfilled the scheme with the twenty five volumes of biography under his editorship (first series, 10 vols., 1834-38; second series, 15 vols., 1844-47). Encyclopedic detailedness and comprehensiveness had been the major features of American history writing since the late eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth.

As history sought for more and more details, the difficulty consisted in the manner of giving a narrative unity to the promiscuous accumulation of historical data and revitalizing them in a temporal order. A grab bag of sundry materials could not grow into a meaningful historical account by themselves; they needed some sort of frame of reference to put themselves together into a coherent story. History, in other words, had to be a narrative, something that retained more than the sum of its discrete parts, but the ever-expanding catalog of descriptive data thwarted it, especially when the writer strived to cram them altogether into one piece. Belknap was that sort of historian. The dysfunctional structure of his texts was typical of natural historically oriented writings. The descriptive method of natural history made him decontextualize each episode into an "exile within the text,"[22] so, no matter how many pieces of history were collected, his historical accounts laid out a curiously fragmented, static, and atemporal picture of the world. After all, natural history

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20. Jeremy Belknap, *American Biography; or An Historical Account of Those Persons Who Have Been Distinguished in America as Adventurers, Statesmen, Philosophers, Divines, Warriors, Authors*, vol. 1 (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1794): 5-30.

21. Jared Sparks, ed., *The Library of American Biography*, vol. 1 (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Co., 1839): iv.

22. Regis, *Describing Early America*, 23.

didn't tolerate the idea of temporality or mutability, but it just drew up the inventory of nature's properties which purportedly had been perfected already at the moment of the Creation, although some of them were discovered and revealed to mankind just recently.[23] It could (or could be employed to) underscore the timelessness of the world, but was not quite congenial to the creation of a temporal and dynamic story line.

Then how could Belknap weave a historical narrative in such a data-ridden, descriptive, and ahistorical style of natural history? He admitted that his own style lacked in smoothness, and that as his book was loaded with more and more factual data, there would appear transitional "chasms" in one place or another. While he proposed to present "regular historical deduction," "the critical reader will doubtless find some chasms which in such a work it would be improper to fill by the help of imagination and conjecture" (*NH*, 1: v). To repeat the question: how could Belknap's histories possibly achieve a narrative wholeness, when "imagination and conjecture" sounded like a cheat? That was still less plausible, since he flatly rejected the prescription of a time-honored historiographical frame of reference. The framework of "sacred history" once served as a master narrative for every secular history, as in the case of Puritan histories. But it was too superstitious and outdated for the rational

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23. As regards the timelessness of natural history, we can consult a lot of excellent studies, besides Regis's *Describing Early America*. See, for example, Wayne Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: The Diligient Writers of Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992; New York: Routledge, 2008): 37-66 and especially her account on the "anti-conquest," the natural historical appropriation of the globe. Essays collected in N. Jardine, J. A. Secord, and E. C. Spary, eds., *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) give very perceptive insights to the issue; among others, Martin Guntau's argument is relevant for our purpose in that it suggests how the ahistorical order of natural history came to be temporalized through the introduction of geological time. See Guntau, "The Natural History of the Earth," in *Cultures of Natural History*, 211-29.

There was an on-going debate on the *modes* of the Creation between monogenesis and polygenesis to be sure, but no matter which side was championed, the idea of the Creation itself, or of the original perfection of the world remained intact. As for the static scale of being in the Classic epistemology, see Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936).

Belknap, and he couldn't count on it anyway.[24] Besides, the next possible master narrative — the evolutionary theory — was yet so long to come, unavailable to the eighteenth-century historian.

When it came to anthropocentric history (not god-inspired one), the most important point lay in the handling of the miscellaneous medley of individual details. Newly nominated as a prime mover of history, the individual entities provided a host of individual data for history writing (there were just as many data as the number of the individuals), and the task of historians was to make order and create a unified historical account out of them. Just as Belknap was composing his histories, moreover, there arose a nationwide discussion on the very topic of dealing with the individual: that is, the argument on Federalism and individual freedom. This was not a coincidence, but the contemporary interest in the individual awakened a desire not just for collection but integration of them, and history writing and the Federalist nation-building shared the same concern about how the individual parts would consolidate into the whole. Belknap himself considered them both to be rooted in the same problem of individualism.[25]

Our next step is then to examine how Belknap understood the Federalist handling of the individual, and how it had to do with his philosophy of history. One of the best clues can be

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24. Sidney Kaplan and George B. Kirsch make the same point in their essays, both suggesting that Belknap replaced divine providence with human reason as the controlling principle of his historiography. As I will show in this essay, however, the full implications of excessive particularity of Belknap's historiography should be considered as an expression of the contemporary interest in "individuals." See Kaplan, "*The History of New-Hampshire*: Jeremy Belknap as Literary Craftsman"; Kirsch, "Jeremy Belknap: Man of Letters in the Young Republic," *The New England Quarterly* 54.1 (March 1981): 33-55.

25. The emphasis on the individual was taken over by Romanticism later in the nineteenth century. Ralph Waldo Emerson's lecture on "American Scholar" is one of the most famous Romantic declaration of independence of the individual: "Another sign of our times, also marked by an analogous political movement, is, the new importance given to the single person. Every thing that tends to insulate the individual, — to surround him with barriers of natural respect, so that each man shall feel the world is his, and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state with a sovereign state; — tends to true union as well as greatness."

found in his historical allegory, *The Foresters* (1792; revised and enlarged in 1796), in which we will encounter quite a unique representation of the federal republic system.

III. Honey Bees and Fiddlers: National Unity or Individual Uniqueness?

The Foresters is a political satire of the American Revolutionary War, in which Belknap adopted major characters from John Arbuthnot's satire, *History of John Bull* (1712), including John Bull the clothier and his family and neighbors. The story is chiefly set in Bull's woods. Bull has long neglected care of it, while his apprentices express their desire to move to the forest and set up on their own. The plot evolves around the struggle of the apprentices turned Foresters in the new environment and the conflict between the Bulls and the gradually flourishing sylvan settlers, which ends up in a series of lawsuits for the ownership of the forest. Obviously, it traces the course of the actual strife between England and the North American colonies. John Bull symbolizes England, and other countries and colonies also are personified respectively, like "Old Lewis the cudgel player (France)," "Walter Pipeweed (Virginia)," "John Codline (Massachusetts)," "William Broardbrim (Pennsylvania)," and others (George Washington stars in the episode of lawsuits as an attorney for the Foresters. For more details, see Appendix at the end of this chapter). Compared with the three-volume *The History of New-Hampshire*, *The Foresters*, two hundred forty pages long in the first edition, wanted descriptive detailedness and comprehensiveness, presenting only a light playful review of American history.[26] But the book was pretty well read by the contemporary people. Under the entry of Jeremy Belknap, the Duyckinck brothers' *Cyclopædia of American Literature* (vol.1, 1856) cited William Cullen Bryant, who in his speech at the semi-centennial celebration of the New-York Historical Society in 1854, referred to *The Foresters* as "long a favorite at New England firesides"; and the encyclopedia article itself attested to the popularity of the story, as it excerpted quite a

26. The second edition of *The Foresters* was issued in 1796, with two additional chapters on the family feud in the Lewis's (the French Revolution) and its influence on the Foresters. Other than that, the second edition follows the same plot as the previous one's, so I use the first edition in the present essay.

long passage from *The Foresters*, but not a single line from *The History of New-Hampshire*.[27]

Still, the two texts had something, or even something crucial, in common with each other. That is, again, natural history. *The Foresters* was composed of a series of letters from a traveler who visited the Foresters' country and reported his findings to his friend back home: "To perform the promise which I made to you before I began my journey, I will give you such an account of this, once forest, but now cultivated and pleasant country, as I can collect from my conversation with its inhabitants, and from the perusal of their old family papers, which they have kindly permitted me to look into for my entertainment."[28] This epistolary style bore a striking similarity to that of natural history texts. The correspondence network was one of the staple features of natural historical endeavor in the New World. Eighteenth-century natural history would have been nothing if it had not been for the extensive epistolary interaction among its transatlantic coteries, such as thirty-five years of correspondence between the wealthy London dilettante Peter Collinson and the colonial botanist John Bartram, or the similar exchanges through the French government's circular questionnaire about the American state of being and Thomas Jefferson's response to it in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*.[29] The epistolary traffic ensured the steady flow of verbal and

27. See Evert A. Duyckinck and George L. Duyckinck, *Cyclopædia of American Literature; Embracing Personal and Critical Notices of Authors, and Selections from Their Writings*, vol. 1. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1856): 253-58. Bryant's comment on *The Foresters* can be found in the footnote of page 255.

Modern criticisms on *The Foresters* are few. Except the biographies (Tucker's, Lawson's and Kirsch's) which duly, if not fully, touch upon the book, there are only two scholarly discussions about it: Walter H. Eitner, "Jeremy Belknap's *The Foresters*: A Thrice-Told Tale," *Early American Literature* 14 (1979): 156-62; and Pete Kyle McCarter, "Mother Carey's Jacobin Chickens," *Early American Literature* 14 (1979): 163-73.

28. Jeremy Belknap, *The Foresters, an American Tale: Being a Sequel to the History of John Bull the Clothier* (Boston: I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, 1792): 3-4. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with its abbreviated title, *F*, and page numbers in parentheses.

29. The epistolary exchange between Peter Collinson and John Bartram, plus that between John Fothergill and William Bartram (John's son), is the main focus for the first chapter of Irmscher's *The Poetics of Natural History*, 14-55. As for the compositional history of *Notes of the State of Virginia*, see William Peden's "Introduction" to the University of North Carolina edition of *Notes on the State of*

visual representations, as well as actual specimens, of American nature to Europe, and informed the rhetoric of natural history texts of the day. One of the best literary exploitations of this letter-form convention was J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), which dramatized a simple American farmer's attempt at answering inquires about his settlement as he was urged to do so by a metropolitan gentleman in London. *The Foresters*, too, adapted the same style, though with a Swiftian satirical twist. Viewed in terms of form, it was a book of natural historical observation of the forest inhabitants, the American people.[30]

Not just in form, but narrative contents also highlighted a couple of natural objects, which, according to Belknap, were closely related with the organization of the Foresters' / American society. After winning their independence from the Bulls, the Foresters went on to attempt a series of experiments in forming a partnership among themselves, and in so doing, they followed hints of nature as models for their society: first, the colony of beavers and then that of honey bees.

The beaver-model community was based on the purest liberty and equality among the individual constituents. The Foresters asked to themselves, "Why should we, said they, look abroad for precedents, when we have enough among ourselves? See the *beavers* in our own brooks and meadows, how they work in complete partnership, each family has its own cell, and a number of cells are placed in one pond. They carry on their operations with peace and unanimity, without even the appearance of a *master*. Here is a perfect republic, a complete equality, a striking example of order without subordination, of liberty without jealousy, of

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Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982): xi-xxv; and Regis, *Describing Early America*, 80-84.

30. When *The Foresters* was first serialized in the Philadelphia *Columbian Magazine* from June 1787 to April 1788, it was not formatted in the epistolary style, which Belknap adopted at the time of book-form publication in 1792. Why was this change? At first, this satirical piece was only "a by business," a diversion from his responsibilities as a minister and his project of the state history, but as he bounded the magazine installments into a book, he apparently took it more seriously and gave it a more creditable and familiar form: the epistolary style of natural history. See Belknap to Hazard, January 10, 1786, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 2: 424.

industry without coercion, of economy without parsimony, of sagacity without overbearing influence," and the Foresters came to call this type of partnership "confederation" (*F*, 173-74). The beaver was, in other words, a symbol of completely independent and indifferent individuals. Belknap once dealt with beavers more minutely than any other creatures in the third volume of *The History of New-Hampshire* (*NH*, 3: 154-61), and referred to the beaver individualism briefly: "Some accounts mention several hundred beavers assembling and holding a council previously to building a dam; but I am assured that a single family, and even a single beaver, when he has left his partners, will go regularly to work either in building or repairing a dam as there may be occasion" (*NH*, 3: 156). The beaver-model confederation was thus an assemblage of sovereign individuals, who were proud of being their own masters, invested with the ability and rights not to obey the call of the centralized administrative council but to rely on their own intuition and policy.[31]

And yet, the beaver-model confederation proved to be nothing flawless. Each individual Forester insisted on his own liberty and rights and never compromised with others, and what was worse, no one could arbitrate the disputes among them (because they were all equals), so that the whole community came on the verge of breakdown pretty soon. Under the circumstances, then, the Foresters set out to search for another model for their partnership building, and they were lucky enough to find the alternative once again in their forest, that is, the honey bee colony. The absolute freedom and equality of the beaver model might be ideal, but in actuality, there was as it were natural inequality in society between those talented, qualified to lead and those led by them. "Now if there is in fact such an inequality existing among us, why should we act as if no such thing existed? We have tried the *beaver* scheme of partnership long enough, and find it will not do. Let us then adopt the practice of another kind of industrious animals which we have among us — Let us imitate the *bees*, who are governed by one supreme head, and under that direction conduct their whole economy with perfect order and regularity" (*F*, 186-87). Finally, the Foresters were

31. As a clue to the contemporary natural historical understanding, it is interesting to know Belknap represented beavers "not only as an amphibious" but "a connecting link between quadrupeds and fishes" (*NH*, 3: 154).

settled into the one union, governed in "perfect order and regularity" just like the honey bee nation.

In American history, these episodes corresponded with the period from the post-revolutionary Articles of Confederation (created in 1777, ratified in 1781) to the ratification of the Constitution and the federal government in 1788 (coming into effect in 1789). The beaver model symbolized the former social system, in which each state assumed independent sovereignty, eager to wield its own hard-earned rights and liberty; and the honey bee model stood for the latter, the federal republic, where each state delegated a part of its rights to the centralized government, which in turn presided over the union for the advancement of national interests. A stalwart Federalist himself, Belknap asserted the need to entrust some part of responsibility to the federal government repeatedly in his sermons and private letters to the fellow historian, Ebenezer Hazard.[32] His 1785 *Election Sermon*, for instance, was all about the urge to establish the federal union. "The idea of each State by itself being sovereign, if it be too much cherished, may prove us to be like the members of the body saying one to the other 'I have no need of you.' We are known abroad as United States; our true sovereignty consists in our union, as our independence does in our not being subject to a foreign power."[33] His satisfaction with the adoption of the Constitution was obvious through the closing chapters of *The History of New-Hampshire*, vol. 2, which ended with the celebration of the federal government: "Let it be the sincere prayer and endeavour of every thoughtful citizen, that such harmony may prevail between the general government, and the jurisdiction of each State, as the peculiar delicacy of their connexion requires; and that the blessings of 'peace, liberty, and safety,' so dearly obtained, may descend inviolate to our

32. Ebenezer Hazard, a native of Philadelphia, served as Postmaster-General from 1782 to 1789. He was well-known for his devotion to historical pursuits. Belknap met him around 1788, and their historical fraternity lasted until the former's death in 1798. Their correspondence was published in two volumes, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th series, vols. 2 and 3. Among other biographies of Belknap, Lawson's *American Plutarch*, puts strong emphasis on the relationship between the two historians.

33. Jeremy Belknap, *An Election Sermon, Preached before the General Court, of New-Hampshire, at Portsmouth, June 2, 1785* (Portsmouth: Printed by Melcher and Osborne, 1785): 31.

posterity" (*NH*, 2: 481).

In *The Foresters*, moreover, Belknap even mocked at the sheer nonsense of the Anti-Federalist arguments. According to him, it was solely due to "JEALOUSY" that some were reluctant to trust other citizens; for, they claimed that "it was impossible to put it into any man's power to do you good, without at the same time putting into his power to do you hurt" (*F*, 191). You could not trust a barber to shave your beard because he might cut your throat, nor trust a cook to dress your meat because he might poison you, and nor even share the same bed with your wife because she might choke you in your sleep. Belknap remonstrated against this fallacious view. "Fie, fie, gentlemen," he warned, "do not indulge such whims: Be careful in the choice of your barbers, your bakers, your cooks, and your wives; pay them well and treat them well, and make it their *interest* to treat you well, and you need not fear them" (*F*, 192). It was a matter of trust or mutual confidence, without which, our social lives would be impossible. Belknap once asked, "Why should we be unwilling to trust delegates of our own nomination, and who may be recalled at our pleasure, with power to preserve our public interests, to secure our credit, and especially to fulfill engagements which we have already given them power to contract?" And his answer was simple and quite realistic: just count on the administrations of "our best men."[34] Between beavers and honey bees, there was virtually no freedom of choice for fallible mortals. Or to mix these metaphors with one of the most famous Federalist motto, if men were beavers, no government would be necessary; but as it was, they fell far short of being perfectly independent and responsible beavers, so they instead had to be honey bees to alleviate their defects as individuals through collective action and mutual trust of the federal hive.[35]

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34. Belknap, *An Election Sermon,* 32.

35. The motto in the Federalist No. 51 reads as follows: "But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary." See James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (1788; London: Penguin Books, 1987): 319-20. As for the federalist bent in Belknap's thought, see also Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 92-114 and Lawson, *The American Plutarch*, 101-11.

The honey bee had been a special insect for America since the very beginning of the settlement. Or, for that matter, America, as a new Canaan, "a land flowing with milk and honey," had been inscribed with the image of the honey bee since as early as its discovery. Through the colonial era to the Independence, a number of public and private organizations used the icon as a device for their seals, chiefly because of the traditional association of the honey bee with diligence and order. Among other things, the 1779 continental paper money featured a thirteen-ring bee skep, which, of course, represented a unity of the original thirteen states. As was also shown in Crèvecœur's *Letters from an American Farmer*, where the farmer James praised the colony of honey bees for "their government, their industry" and referred to it as a "republic," the honey bee provided a fit symbol of the stable national constitution for the newly independent America.[36] To boot, the symbolism of the honey bee was familiar to Belknap personally. When he conceived the honey bee Federalism, he must have had on his mind one of Isaac Watts's popular moral songs about the industrious "little busy bee," given his respect for this great British hymnwriter (whose songs he would later compile in *Sacred Poetry: Consisting of Psalms and Hymns, Adapted to Christian Devotion, in Publick and Private* (1795)).[37] Little wonder, then, that Belknap chose the beehive for the

36. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): 31, 33.

37. The honey bee is one of the recurrent symbols in Watts's songs, and his most famous honey bee song is Song XX "Against Idleness and Mischief," in *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* (London: M. Lawrence, 1715).

> How doth the little busy bee
> Improve each shining hour,
> And gather honey all the day
> From every opening flower!
>
> How skilfully she builds her cell!
> How neat she spreads the wax!
> And labours hard to store it well
> With the sweet food she makes.

Massachusetts Historical Society: "For the Historical Society a Beehive — supported by two Beavers Nil Magnum sine labore Nothing great is done without labor."[38] The same story here

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In works of labour or of skill
I would be busy too:
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play
Let my first years be past,
That I may give for every day
Some good account at last.

Belknap's *Sacred Poetry: Consisting of Psalms and Hymns, Adapted to Christian Devotion, in Publick and Private* (Boston: Joseph Belknap, 1795) was originally intended for the use of his Long Lane congregation, but soon it received public acclaim and went through a number of editions even after Belknap's death. The publisher of the first edition, Joseph Belknap, was the author's first son.

38. This is a journal entry dated in 1791, immediately after the foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society. In 1794, the Society decided to create its official seal and appointed James Winthrop, one of the founders, to sketch a design for it, but this didn't produce any substantial plan. Belknap later developed another design and wrote in his diary in December 1796: "Device and motto for a Seal for Historical Society a flying *eagle* — a ranging *wolf* — and a *shark* — all seeking their prey." Louis Leonard Tucker claims "with respect to the Society's role as a collector of historical materials, the symbols of the eagle, wolf, and shark were more appropriate to Belknap," but I believe the imagery of the honey bee is more important when we examine Federalist ideas in Belknap's historiographical and archival enterprises. How Belknap was attached to the imagery of the honey bee, we can have some idea by looking at the frontispiece of *The Foresters*, in which honey bees (and beavers, too) symbolize the active nation building of the Foresters (background), in sharp contrast with droopy Bull's signing a quitclaim and his wife's unquenched rage (foreground).

The official seal was made and confirmed in 1834 under the presidency of John Davis. It featured a bee skep and honey bees against a pastoral backdrop, with the motto "Sic Vos Non Vobis." Although the devise actually consisted of a beehive and bees, it was uncertain whether Belknap's original plan affected Davis's conception. As for history of the Society's seal, see Louis Leonard Tucker, *The Massachusetts Historical Society: A Bicebtennial History 1791-1991* (Boston: Massachusetts

again. The beaver individualism was important, but it bore only secondary import to "support" the honey bee system of communal order. I will afterward discuss the Federalist connotations of the Historical Society, but for the moment suffice it to say that the honey bee was of particular significance to Belknap, especially to his idea of systematic efforts, whether in the case of federal union making or document archiving.[39]

To make the symbolism even more cogent, Belknap went on to undertake a natural history of the *American* honey bee. In 1792, he was asked to give a tercentennial lecture on Columbus's discovery of the American continent in the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the lecture script was soon published, but this accompanied with a full-length essay on the honey bee in America, "On the question, whether the Honey-bee is a native of America?"[40] In the essay, he opened up the argument with a refutation of Jefferson's statement on the honey bee in *Notes on the Sate of Virginia* — "The honey-bee is not a native of our continent."[41] Putting a number of historical evidence together, he maintained that there used to be a species of honey bee in South America which was quite similar to the European counterpart, and that the Indian folklore in Florida and Georgia attested to the age-old tradition of honey hunt. Indeed, the honey bees in New England were imported from Europe, but he believed, even if that importation had not taken place, the bees of the southern parts of the American continent would have spread to the north, and those present

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Historical Society, 1995): 58-61; and Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 103-4.

39. A for a survey of the symbolism of the honey bee in America, see Tammy Horn, *Bees in America: How the Honey Bee Shaped a Nation* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005).

40. Jeremy Belknap, *A Discourse, Intended to Commemorate the Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus; Delivered at the Request of the Historical Society in Massachusetts, on the 23d Day of October, 1792, Being the Completion of the Third Century since That Memorable Event* (Boston: Belknap and Hall, 1792). Besides the essay on the honey bee, three more discussions are added to the lecture script: "On the circumnavigation of Africa by the ancients," "An Examination of the pretensions of Martin Behaim to a discovery of American prior to that of Columbus, with a Chronological detail of all the Discoveries made in the 15th Century," and "On the colour of the native Americans and the *recent* population of this Continent."

41. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785; Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1982): 71, and Belknap, *A Discourse*, 117.

now in New England might be a mixture of native and imported bees. Hence his conclusion, "It appears then, that the honey bee *is* a native of America."[42] Even at the risk of logical inconsistency, he persisted in connecting America and the honey bee, not just figuratively but literally, and this connection, he thought, would enforce and legitimate the honey bee symbolism of the stable federal union in America.

Thus again, American history was given natural historical undertones, and yet the buzzing sound of the honey bee produced ironical repercussions on the entire story. Belknap was most likely to know a subversive connotation of the symbolism, as he referred to the inactive members of his Historical Society as "drones in the hive": "How different are the dispositions of men! Some are wishing and seeking for admission into our Society, but we will not admit them because We conceive that they aim only at a feather in their Cap, and would be but drones in the hive. Others are men of genius and merit with whom we wish to associate and they decline!"[43] The reason why the colony of honey bees was taken as a model for the federal system was the existence of the single steering power, the queen bee, and the orderly organization around that central government. Looked from the other point of view, however, it was also a metaphor for the anarchic swarming masses, which might turn out unruly motley crews or useless "drones" at any moment if anything was going wrong with the central power.[44] In England, honey bees had been long analogized to a chaotic mob or knavish rabble, like the corrupted gang in Bernard Mandeville's satirical verse, "The Grumbling Hive: or, Knaves Turn'd Honest" (1705; later incorporated with a series of twenty essays and published under the title of *The Fable of the Bess: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* in 1714). In an American context, too, the revolutionary poet Philip Freneau sang the drone image in "On a Honey Bee Who Hath Drunk Too Much Wine and Drowned Therein," in which honey bees were characterized as what should be strictly disciplined and controlled.

> Yet take not oh! too deep a drink,

42. Belknap, *A Discourse*, 123.

43. Belknap to St. George Tucker, Boston, December 28, 1795. Quoted in Tucker, *Clio's Consort*, 111.

44. Horn, *Bees in America*, 5-17.

And in the ocean die;
Here bigger bees than you might sink,
Even bees full six feet high.
Like Pharaoh, then, you would be said
To perish in a sea of red.

Do as you please, your will is mine;
Enjoy it without fear —
And your grave will be this glass of wine,
Your epitaph — a tear —
Go, take your seat in Charon's boat,
We'll tell the hive, you died afloat.[45]

Social order and public unrest — the honey bee served as a double-faced metaphor, representing absolutely opposite aspects of a collective body at the same time.

This cast a shadow of uncertainty over the republican ideal in *The Foresters*. The story ended with the realization of social harmony and balance among the Foresters, but we now know it was not so happy a denouement as it appeared at first glance. The consolidation of the union was not automatically achieved through simple communal assent, but it was the product of sustained efforts on the part of the administration to govern and contain every seed of disquietude, which was always smoldering among the individual constituents one way or another. To make matters even more complicated, there came on the scene people called "fiddlers" who expounded the honey bee model of federal government (*F*, 188-89). Of course, this was a pun on "Federalist" (the honey bee model which the fiddlers espoused was called "fiddle," by the way), but we cannot overlook the obvious double meaning of the word. For one thing, the fiddlers were those who would bring the individual voices into a harmonious unity to the melody of their fiddle, and in this sense, they themselves embodied

45. Philip Freneau, *Poems Written and Published during the American Revolutionary War, and Republished from the Original Manuscripts*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey, 1809): 97-98.

the governing principle of the honey bee model. For the other, the term "fiddler" connoted "swindler," too (*The Oxford English Dictionary* identifies the first use of the verb "fiddle" in the sense of "cheat" or "swindle" in Thomas Dekker's *Honest Whore*, 1604). If the fiddlers actually proved swindlers, individual people were required to judge for themselves as occasion might demand, rather than surrender themselves to the would-be harmony of the fiddlers' tune. The problem of the federal union was dramatized here again, and this time with major emphasis on the danger inherent in the central governing power, while the drone image pointed to the jarring instability of the individual members.

The two polar opposite values were competing in Belknap's characterization of the federal union then: the value of overall harmony and unity of the whole, and that of unsubduable uniqueness of each individual. At the very end of the third volume of *The History of New-Hampshire*, Belknap presented a tableau of an ideal community, as he dreamily conjured up a happy pastoral vision of what he called "A decent musical society."

> Were I to form a picture of happy society, it would be a town consisting of a due mixture of hills, valleys and streams of water: The land well fenced and cultivated; the roads and bridges in good repair; a decent inn for the refreshment of travellers, and for public entertainments: The inhabitants mostly husbandmen; their wives and daughters domestic manufacturers; a suitable proportion of handicraft workmen and two or three traders; a physician and lawyer, each of whom should have a farm for his support. A clergyman of any denomination, which should be agreeable to the majority, a man of good understanding, of a candid disposition and exemplary morals; not a metaphysical, nor a polemic, but a serious and practical preacher. A school master who should understand his business and teach his pupils to govern themselves. A social library, annually increasing, and under good regulation. A club of sensible men, seeking mutual improvement. A decent musical society. No intriguing politician, horse jockey, gambler or sot; but all such characters treated with contempt. Such a situation may be considered as the most favourable to social happiness of any which this world can afford. (*NH*, 3: 333-34)

This is "A decent musical society," well tuned to the melody of the fiddlers, as it were. Ironically enough, this portrait of a model society is devoid of life, too poetic to be real; its beautiful otherworldliness forbids us to imagine any interaction between the inhabitants. Belknap touched upon a decent set of principal occupations in his dream society, to be sure, but he remained so reticent as not to go into specifics. It was the same as the ideal of the honey bee republic, where individual ragged voices were drowned in the general overtone of the union. Well-ordered harmony was attained only at the cost of each singer's uniqueness, which was muffled out to sound like a typical voice of the whole, nothing different from others. Still, we cannot rush to any hasty conclusion about Belknap's rendering of Federalism, because, let us remember, it is a closing paragraph of that third volume of *The History of New-Hampshire* which puts such inordinate stress on particularities. The ideas of unity and particularity thus coexisted and alternately asserted themselves as rule in his history writing.

Considering that Belknap believed firmly in the centralization of power in the federal government, his ambivalence toward the union might seem strange. Perhaps it showed subtle indecision on his part, but it also testified to the double-sidedness of Federalism itself, which aimed at the balancing between individual uniqueness and national unity, taking constant care not to yield each to the other. It was, in other words, a system of "the mutuality of self-assertion and self-abnegation": "self-assertion" was guaranteed as a province of independent individual, while "self-abnegation" was required as a necessary condition of the union.[46] The ideal management was somewhere in-between, but, if at all, it was a precarious one, threatening to topple either way at any moment. And, even more intriguingly, the conflict within the concept of Federalism epitomized the problem of Belknap's history writing, which also obstinately clung to individual particularities and at the same time aspired to unify those details into one narrative whole. Up to the last few pages before its ending, *The History of New-Hampshire* cataloged a plenum of meticulous

46. Jay Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, & the Culture of Performance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993): 150.

details and, as we have seen above, the grand finale was a last-minute, or apparently out-of-place, attempt at a synthetic vision of the republic. A far more compact and readable story, *The Foresters* also tasked itself to narrative synthesization and yet, along with the closing scene of *The History of New-Hampshire*, it could not purge uncertainty and ambiguity from its representation of the federal union, which ended up with an ironic consequence on the story itself. It was as if Belknap hadn't had any other way available but irony or, to be precise, satire as a dramatic expression of irony, to portray the constitution of double-faced federal republic society.[47]

Belknap was fully aware of the close relationship both in content and form between the federal system and his own historiographical enterprises. Or rather, the federal method of national consolidation provided him with a fit example for his literary as well as institutional ventures in history writing. The former produced those historical texts we have discussed so far, and the fruit of the latter efforts was the foundation of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the first of its kind in the United States. Then let us go over the essentials of Federalist thought, which ought to correspond with those of Belknap's historiographical endeavors, and then we will be able to realize the importance of the uniqueness/unity dialectics in his projects even more clearly. As regards Federalism, we can depend on *the* classic text, *The Federalist Papers*, of course.

IV. History Writing and the Building of the Federal Republic

Federalism was an idea of halving powers between the local and central governments and thereby consolidating the union of the states. Most of the state governments, freshly independent in themselves, were unwilling to entrust even a part of their hard-earned rights

47. According to Hayden White, post-Enlightenment to nineteenth-century historiography is "prefigured" linguistically in four tropes of poetic language — Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, and Irony —, which are dramatized into the corresponding narrative forms, that is, Romance, Tragedy, Comedy, and Satire. I will later discuss the relevance of the category "Irony/Satire" to Belknap's writings. As for a general discussion on linguistic "prefiguration" in history writing, see White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973): 1-80.

to the central government, which might have looked like another oppressor to them. The purpose of "The Federalist," a series of essays published by the collective hands of James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay in the New York *Independent Journal* (October 27, 1787 to August 15, 1788), was to alleviate the people's anxiety and reluctance toward Federalism, and persuade them to ratify the new Federal Constitution.

One of the first major points made in *The Federalist Papers* was about the urgency of the federal system in such a nation of vast territorial expanse as the United States. A pure democracy, according to the Federalists' definition, was "a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person," while a federal republic was "a government in which the scheme of representation takes place," and "A democracy, consequently, will be confined to a small spot. A republic may be extended over a large region."[48] Similar arguments pervaded throughout "The Federalist" No. 1 to No. 30, and in any case, the Federalists pointed out the natural limit of direct democracy, which required all the citizens, however far they lived apart, to assemble as often as occasion demanded, and the counterbalancing advantage of the federal system, which, in turn, could cover "that distance from the centre which will barely allow the representatives to meet as often as may be necessary for the administration of public affairs."[49] Although America then was circumscribed within the Atlantic coast, that was large enough to pose a problem to the unification of the national power. From the Federalist point of view, the spatial expanse shouldn't provide any excuse to "contract our views, and resort to the expedient of separate confederacies." Instead, "This, at all events, must be evident, that the very difficulty itself, drawn from the extent of the country, is the strongest argument in favor of an energetic government; for any other can certainly never preserve the Union of so large an empire."[50] The federal system, they would claim, was the only possible way to keep "the Union of so large an empire" well concerted.

Belknap's "*Republic of Letters*," as we discussed in Chapter One, was modeled after the

48. Madison, et al., *The Federalist Papers*, 126, 141.

49. Madison, et al., *The Federalist Papers*, 142.

50. Madison, et al., *The Federalist Papers*, 187-88.

federal system of representative government. In his 1790 "Plan of an Antiquarian Society," he proposed the centralized system of historical societies, in which the Massachusetts Historical Society would work as a central office to govern other subordinate local archives. Each member of the Society, according to the proposal, "shall engage to use his utmost endeavors to collect and communicate to the society, manuscripts, printed books and pamphlets, historical facts, biographical anecdotes, observations in natural history, specimens of natural and artificial curiosities, and any other matters which may elucidate the natural and political history of America, from the earliest times to the present day."[51] (N.B. There was no distinction between natural history and social history in Belknap's original conception of the Historical Society, although the natural history and geography departments were abandoned in 1833.)[52]

It was through this federal-model network of historians that a horde of documentary resources were collected into the Massachusetts Historical Society, and also into Belknap's own writing project. For the preparation of *The History of New-Hampshire*, he employed the same circular-letter method just as he did for the library of the Society: "a printed circular letter was addressed to the several Clergymen, and other gentlemen of public character, in all parts of the State, requesting their communications on various heads of inquiry" (*NH*, 3: iii; as for the circular letter for *The History of New-Hampshire*, see Figure 4). His finished texts, as well as the archives of the Historical Society, were intended for the systematization and unification of thus accumulated historical materials, and ideally, the fulfillment of coordinated efforts of *many* in creating *one* history. One of the most remarkable achievements of Belknap's historical studies was the establishment of systematic data collection through this network of historiographical fraternity, which corresponded exactly with his Federalist desire for the well-organized stable social system. As one biographer asserted, "If there is any one theme which pervades his writings it is his search for order, stability, authority,

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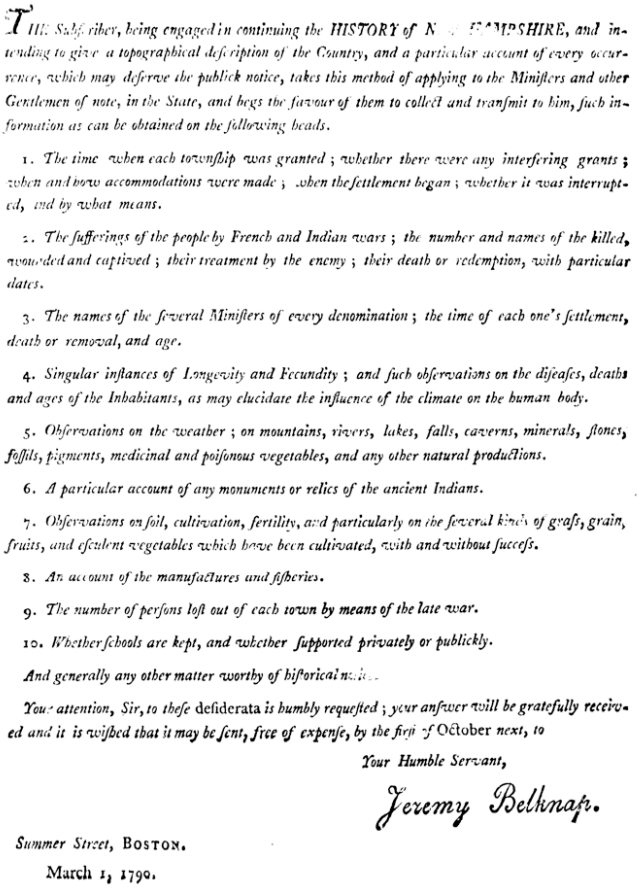
51. Jeremy Belknap, "Plan of an Antiquarian Society" (1790), reprinted in Jane B. Marcou, *Life of Jeremy Belknap, D.D., the Historian of New Hampshire: Selections from His Correspondence and Other Writings* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1847): 185.

52. See Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, 135.

system, and control in all aspects of life."[53] He was such an assiduous busy bee, heartily engaging himself with the maintenance of the system.



THE Subſcriber, being engaged in continuing the HISTORY of N[illegible]AMPSHIRE, and intending to give a topographical deſcription of the Country, and a particular account of every occurrence, which may deſerve the publick notice, takes this method of applying to the Miniſters and other Gentlemen of note, in the State, and begs the favour of them to collect and tranſmit to him, ſuch information as can be obtained on the following heads.

1. The time when each townſhip was granted; whether there were any interfering grants; when and how accommodations were made; when the ſettlement began; whether it was interrupted, and by what means.

2. The ſufferings of the people by French and Indian wars; the number and names of the killed, wounded and captived; their treatment by the enemy; their death or redemption, with particular dates.

3. The names of the ſeveral Miniſters of every denomination; the time of each one's ſettlement, death or removal, and age.

4. Singular inſtances of Longevity and Fecundity; and ſuch obſervations on the diſeaſes, deaths and ages of the Inhabitants, as may elucidate the influence of the climate on the human body.

5. Obſervations on the weather; on mountains, rivers, lakes, falls, caverns, minerals, ſtones, foſſils, pigments, medicinal and poiſonous vegetables, and any other natural productions.

6. A particular account of any monuments or relics of the ancient Indians.

7. Obſervations on ſoil, cultivation, fertility, and particularly on the ſeveral kinds of graſs, grain, fruits, and eſculent vegetables which have been cultivated, with and without ſucceſs.

8. An account of the manufactures and fiſheries.

9. The number of perſons loſt out of each town by means of the late war.

10. Whether ſchools are kept, and whether ſupported privately or publickly.

And generally any other matter worthy of hiſtorical n[illegible]

Your attention, Sir, to theſe deſiderata is humbly requeſted; your anſwer will be gratefully received and it is wiſhed that it may be ſent, free of expenſe, by the firſt of October next, to

Your Humble Servant,

Jeremy Belknap.

Summer Street, BOSTON.
March 1, 1790.

Figure 4: A Circular Letter to "The Subscriber, Being Engaged in Continuing the HISTORY of NEW HAMPSHIRE" (Boston, 1790)

Still, Belknap's building of the historiographical "Republic of Letters" placed a somewhat contradictory stress upon the uniqueness of each local informant/information, despite his insistence on the systematic unity over the whole. Another glance at his circular letter is enough to attest to his typical meticulousness in data collection. There his inquiries encompassed a history of the development of each township, including biographies of important persons; meteorological and geographical characteristics; conditions of religion, education, and industry; stories of the involvement in the Indian wars and the Revolutionary War; and even examples of "the effect of spiritous liquors on the human

53. Kirsch, *Jeremy Belknap*, iv.

constitution," and "SINGULAR instances of Longevity and Fecundity from the first settlement, to the present time."[54] How could one possibly arrange and give coherency and unity to the erratic array of wildly diversified data? Belknap's ideal was the well-balanced combination of harmonious unity as a whole and uniqueness of each individual evidence, but it was not to be realized as was shown in the unstable structure of *The History of New-Hampshire*. There always arose a conflict between the unifying centripetal force and the untamable edgy individuality of particular objects.

The Federalists shared the same concern with the historian. They assumed the combination of overall national unity and individual uniqueness of each state to be essential to the federal system. Their concern was clearly epitomized in the two recurrent words in *The Federalist Papers*, that is, "liberty" and "stability." More often than not, these two terms were used in pairs.

> The genius of republican liberty seems to demand on one side, not only that all power should be derived from the people, but that those intrusted with it should be kept in dependence on the people, by a short duration of their appointments; and that even during this short period the trust should be placed not in a few, but a number of hands. Stability, on the contrary, requires that the hands in which power is lodged should continue for a length of time the same…. [E]nergy in government requires not only a certain duration of power, but the execution of it by a single hand. (*Federalist*, 243-44)

"[R]epublican liberty" had to provide one occasion after another for the people to execute their power, most typically through frequent elections of as many representatives as possible. In this context, "liberty" was what ensured the sovereign rights of each individual constituent of the nation. On the other hand, the nation as a whole had to maintain executive stability, which would be achieved through the delegation of power to a few persons, or

54. Jeremy Belknap, "The Subscriber, Being Engaged in Continuing the HISTORY of NEW HAMPSHIRE" (Boston, 1790). See Figure 4.

maybe "a single hand," for a length of time. The federal system was the bridging device between those seemingly contradictory concepts, individual liberty and communal unity, and to realize the ideal of dynamic stability, which should keep energy of individual powers intact, but at the same time conduct them in unison through a single path.[55] In this sort of society, everybody was required at once to stay unique and keep in harmony with the whole. Preferably, each individual's unique idea only happened to prove identical with others' and correspond completely with public opinion, and this without any preconceived design whatsoever. Involuntary conformity, as it were.

Of course, this was a most unlikely ideal. Neither did the federal republic nor the Republic of Letters form itself spontaneously. Nor did any random collection of historical data integrate themselves into a meaningfully unified narrative of their own accord. What was common to those efforts of political, institutional, and literary systematization was a concern about how to rein individuals properly without containing or crippling their energy. Both history writing and federal nation-building were an attempt at defining the newly independent country, and they shared the same problem of balancing overall unity and individual particularity. Just born yesterday, America was still young, wild, and free. We can only imagine what a tough stunt it was to build it and write it into the well-united states of national autonomy.

V. Satire in History

The problem of unity and particularity in America can be understood as that of the duality of the individual: the individual as a unique entity and as a typical unit of the whole at once. When it came to history writing, each individual datum had its own value and importance, but at the same time had to be a typical part of the broad stream of historical

55. Jay Fliegelman discusses "the paradoxical mutuality of self-assertion and self-concealment,"chiefly analyzing the art of elocution through the Revolutionary to the Federalist periods. All his arguments point to the culture of "performance" in the late-eighteenth-century American polity to implement the apparently impossible balance of individual liberty and social stability. Fliegelman's discussion of America Federalism has inspired me in a number of ways. See Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence*, 3, 15, and 94-107 especially.

causation. In the case of the federal constitution, each individual was required to be unique and typical at the same time. Ideally, Federalism was to systematize the unique/typical duality, and the same duality naturally emerged in the historical account of the Federalist stamp. In the very title of *The Foresters*, the duality was inscribed clearly. Take a look at its full title, *The Foresters, an American Tale: Being a Sequel to the History of John Bull the Clothier*. While the book introduced itself as "an American tale," something new and unique, it was also a part of a still bigger story as "a Sequel to the History of John Bull the Clothier."

Belknap's idea of history went two ways. On the one hand, his attention was directed to most detailed particulars and the exhaustive collection of them. *The History of New-Hampshire* was a product of the intense archival efforts, which, as the closing chapter of the third volume obviously showed, were informed by natural historical passion for every detail: "The earth, the air, the sea, the rivers, the mountains, the rocks, the caverns, the animal and vegetable tribes are fraught with instruction. Nature is not half explored; and in what is partly known there are many mysteries, which time, observation and experience must unfold" (*NH*, 3: 329). On the other hand, his history writing also aimed for the systematization of accumulated data into a narrative whole. Overall harmony (or federation) was the ultimate goal in his writings, as well as in his plan for the Republic of Letters. Pulled in the two different directions at one time, his historical accounts could not be otherwise than mixed in style.

Satire was a natural choice as a narrative format of *The Foresters* then. Etymologically derived from the Latin phrase *lanx satura,* which literally means "a platter full of mixed fruits," satire is the most polyphonic and miscellaneous among other rhetorical styles. The best sort of satire accommodates two contradictory ideas, neither to reconcile them nor to prescribe which one is right and which one is wrong, but to inquire and explore what would happen in the process of the opposition. Satire is, one critic maintains, "problematic, open-ended, essayistic, ambiguous in its relationship to history, uncertain in its political effect, resistant to formal closure, more inclined to ask questions than to provide answers, and

ambivalent about the pleasures it offers."[56] As a narrative framework of history, too, satire works in a double-edged, ambiguous and ironic manner. Satiric history, according to Hayden White's tropics of historical discourse, is an advanced form of history writing, not confined to a single-minded point of view but self-conscious or even self-critical of what it says for itself.[57] Belknap's ambivalent descriptions of honey bees and the fiddlers in *The Foresters* both vouchsafed and undermined the story of the federal nation-building. Indecision apparently lurked at the core of his historical account. While he did stick to the idea of federal consolidation, a chaotic mass of discrete individuals haunted him at any moment. The story was playful, to be sure, but, in the final analysis, he looked almost skeptical of his own vision of the federal republic.

Belknap's satiric history might have been an expression of his ambivalent rationalism. He was an outright rationalist in his empirical method of historical research, and in the matter of faith, too, he grew out of the traditional Calvinist view to the more liberal Arminian (or even proto-Unitarian) thought. As a clergyman, however, his Puritan posture didn't or couldn't wobble at least in public, so he sometimes didn't believe what he preached to the parishioners. This alone was ironic enough and partook of self-satire, but the most ironic in his history writing was that he believed in humanity as a whole but not in the individuals. He believed in the nation as a whole and its future, but not in the individual constituents. And his problem was that he nevertheless couldn't forget the individuals. Evidently, there was no hero in *The Foresters*.[58] George the attorney (George Washington) could be the one, but the story didn't feature his heroic act or function as a hero. Instead, the focus was solely upon the Foresters, the people, although the author didn't fully trust their integrity. Here in this covert distrust or reluctant trust was the essence of irony and satire of Belknap's history.

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56. Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (1994; Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995): 5. Griffin refers to the etymology of satire throughout the book.

57. See White, *Metahistory*, 81-132, 230-64.

58. The disappearance of heroes, who are the very nucleus of other forms of history — Romance, tragedy, and comedy — is another characteristic of satiric history. See White, *Metahistory*, 231.

Perhaps, his concern about the incipient rise of the masses made him even more ironic. In the 1796 revised edition of *The Foresters*, he appended two additional "Letters" to expound the threat of unrestrained liberty to the republic. Mr. Lewis's family strife in Letter XVII was a parable of the French Revolution and its horrendous aftermath, and the next and final letter followed up its influence on the United States which was symbolized in the political intrigue of Teneg, an embassy from the newly ascendant Franks (the Citizen Genêt Affair in 1793; "Teneg" is Genêt spelled backwards). The unruly mob of the Whisky Rebellion (1791-94) also might have frightened Belknap. When he wrote about a flock of chickens crying "*whisky, whisky, whisky*" in the field of William Broadbrim (Pennsylvania),[59] it was all to laugh away the violent and irrational demands of the rioters, but the laughter was a forced one, leaving an unquiet twitch on his face. In spite of himself, he must have sensed that the threat was real and nothing to be brushed aside, or on the contrary, that it would possibly overwhelm the Federalist ideal of national centralization someday. Here below is the closing sentence of the 1796 revised edition of *The Foresters*.

> They [the Foresters] are continually making improvements by bridges and canals; and if they should continue at peace among themselves, uninfluenced by the quarrels, and untainted by the dissipation and folly of their neighbors, they will be as happy a set of people as any on the globe.[60]

Apparently, this is a typical happy-ever-after ending. We, however, cannot but note an ominous tone in "if they *should,*" and that the ensuing phrases obliquely hint at the possible perils of "quarrels" and "dissipation and folly."

We know, with hindsight, that Belknap's concern proved right. The political power of the Federalist party deteriorated in the face of emergent Jeffersonian (and proto-Jacksonian) individualism. In the province of archival organization, too, Belknap's cherished plan of the

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59. Jeremy Belknap, *The Foresters, an American Tale: Being a Sequel to the History of John Bull the Clothier*, 2nd edition (Boston: I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, 1796): 231.

60. Belknap, *The Foresters,* 2nd edition, 240.

nationwide network of historical societies never came true. The grand idea of federal systematization both politically and institutionally came to an impasse and grew more and more imaginary and fugitive. After losing their control over society at large, the Federalist intellectuals sought their home in literary production and conjured up a fanciful but supposedly superior order of alternative reality in their writings.[61] Belknap was one of the early progenitors of such literary Federalism.

Appendix: A List of Characters in Jeremy Belknap, *The Foresters*

I. The family of John Bull the clothier (England)

Bull's mother (The Church of England)

Madam Bull #1 and #2 (The British Parliament)

Peg, Bull's sister (Scotland)

Patrick, Bull's brother (Ireland)

II. Bull's Neighbors

Lord Peter (The Catholic Church)

Lord Strut (Spain)

Old Lewis the cudgel player (France)

Nicolas Frog the draper (Holland)

Gustavus the ironmonger (Sweden)

Madam Kate (Russia)

III. The Forest: Allegedly Bull's property, but claimed by the other neighboring families, too (North American continent)

IV. The Foresters: family members or apprentices of the John Bull and others', going to settle in the Forest for one reason or another (North American colonists)

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61. See William C. Dowling, *Literary Federalism in the Age of Jefferson: Joseph Dennie and* The Port Folio, *1801-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999): 69-88.

1. Walter Pipeweed (Sir Walter Raleigh), Virginia (His grandson, George, represents the Foresters as their attorney in the lawsuits against John Bull, and later becomes the Steward of their confederation)
2. Cecilius Peterson, later renamed Cecilius Marygold (Calvert, Lord Baltimore), Maryland
3. Peregrine Pickle (The Plymouth Adventurers), Plymouth Plantation
4. John Codline (Massachusetts fishermen), Massachusetts Bay Colony
5. Humphry Ploughshare, with Tobias Wheatear (Connecticut farmers), Colony of New Haven, Conn.
6. Roger Carrier (Roger Williams), Providence, Rohde Island
7. Robert Lumber (Robert Mason), New Hampshire
8. Casimir (a Swede), Delaware
9. Peter Stiver, a one-legged fellow and later renamed Bullfrog (a Dutch), Albany, NY
10. Bob (Robert Carr), New York
11. Cartrut & Bareclay (Bull's servants), and later on, Julius Caesar, New Jersey
12. William Broardbrim (William Penn), Philadelphia, Penn.
13. Charles Indigo (The Carolina Company), South Carolina
14. Peter Pitch, North Carolina
15. George Trusty (The trustees of Georgia, 1732), Georgia
16. Doctor Squintum, a founder of a charity school for *Orphans* in Georgia (?)
17. Alexander Scouts, a purblind fellow, Nova Scotia
18. Ethan Greenwood, Vermont
19. Hunter Longknife, Kentucky

V. Beasts: Creatures originally inhabiting in the Forest, especially "bears and wolves"(the American Indians)

VI. Black cattle: Black slaves

Chapter Five

American Geographico-History: Visibility and Timelessness in Emma Willard's "Progressive Maps" and "History in Perspective"

I. Geography and History

Open any given history book, and you'll never fail to find a map or two incorporated into the text. This is naturally to be expected, because a map constitutes an indispensable part of history writing. Obviously, every historical event has much to do with geography, if it took *place* in this terrestrial world at all. It is not just that a map is useful for locating historic sites and tracking down the historical course of events on it. More significantly, it also provides a visual outline for the entire narrative. Every map in a historical writing puts forward the scope of its story, and hints at what kind of story follows and how it ends up as well. A map, to be brief, serves as a visual template for written accounts of history.

The case is quite true for American history, which is a story of territorial development in the newly found continent. Soon after its constitutional establishment in the late eighteenth century, the fledging nation-state set about writing its own history, which turned out to be pretty much inclined toward physical representations of the vast land, as was shown in the third volume of Jeremy Belknap's *The History of New-Hampshire*. Since then, the tradition of geographico-history has persisted through centuries to this day, and produced a number of distinguished historians, such as Frederick Jackson Turner, Henry Nash Smith, and Bernard DeVoto to name a few. Arthur Meier Schlesinger's comment on "Geographic Factors in American Development" summarizes the basic ideas of this historiographical school: "That the geographic factor has played an important part in shaping the history of the American people no thoughtful person can deny. The conformation of the Atlantic coast, the mountains and plains and virgin forests of the interior, the frequency of water courses and the variations of climate and soil have all left their impress upon the manner and quality of

American development."[1] We couldn't understand American history properly without due consideration of its geographic aspects. History and geography are so closely interlaced in America that it is hard or even impossible to distinguish the one from the other.

This chapter focuses on one of those associates in the tradition of American geographico-history, Emma Willard, an eminent educator-historian in the mid-nineteenth century. Usually, Willard is known for her pioneer work in the field of women's higher education — she founded the Troy Female Seminary, America's first academy for the young women, in 1821, which is the predecessor of the Emma Willard School, Troy, New York — but it must be remembered that she was also one of the foremost advocates for geographico-history of the day.[2] Her projects embraced a variety of topics ranging from history of the United States to universal history, or from ancient history to modern history, but the underlying message was invariable in any case: geographic knowledge was the essential foundation of historical studies.

As Willard developed her historiographical method in one book after another, moreover, her belief in geographico-history was crystallized into a series of unique inventions, which were called in order of publication "progressive maps," "the Historic Tree," "Picture of Nations," and "the Temple of Time." Seldom taken up seriously now, did these devices definitely represent a culmination of what the tradition of American geographico-history had been heading for, *viz*., the visualization and spatialization of history. The purpose of the present chapter is then to explore the features of the geography-history combination, with a particular emphasis on its eventual development into visualized and spatialized history in

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1. Arthur Meier Schlesinger, *New Viewpoints in American History* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922): 23. "Geographic Factors in American Development" is a title for Chapter Two of *New Viewpoints,* 23-46.

2. As for Willard's life and work, these two books are convenient for reference: Alma Lutz, *Emma Willard: Daughter of Democracy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929); John Lord, *The Life of Emma Willard* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873). Nina Baym's analysis of Willard's works also is quite informative of her scientific ambition and limitation. See Baym, *American Women of Letters and the Nineteenth-Century Sciences: Styles of Affiliation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002): 113-32.

Willard's writings. Her history writing may look ridiculously complicated at first glance, but it is an inevitable, if exaggerated, outcome of the merging of geography and history. On close inspection, it even gives us an important clue to reconsider the nature of American history itself, especially in its implications with the ideas of temporality and spatiality.

II. The Tradition of American Geographico-History

Since the earliest days of national existence, America had been a spatial entity more than anything else, and its history predominantly geographic. Take a look at the first overall *historical* account published in America, Jedidiah Morse's *American Geography* (1789).[3] In its preface, Morse singled out among other people he had been indebted to, Ebenezer Hazard, then Postmaster General of the United States, who gave him permission to use his collection of historical documents. He then went on to explain Hazard had built up the collection with such keen discernment that it proved "the best, and most complete *depositum* of facts relating to the history of America from its first settlement, that is to be found in the United States."[4] This remark clearly implied how much attention Morse directed to historical research while he wrote the book, and actually, a significant part of the volume was allotted for historical

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3. Myra Jehlen points out the first history published in the United States is Morse's *The American Universal Geography* (1793), which, as Morse states in its preface, is a revised and enlarged version of *The American Geography*. Apparently, Jehlen doesn't pay any attention to this earlier version of Morse's geographico-history. Nonetheless, her discussion about the atemporality and corporeality of American history is quite intriguing, and I am much indebted to it in this essay. See Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

Jedidiah Morse was a prominent clergyman in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and wrote a number of religious tracts as well as historical and geographical works. As for his biographical information, see Richard J. Moss, *The Life of Jedidiah Morse: A Station of Peculiar Exposure* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995); Joseph W. Phillips, *Jedidiah Morse and New England Congregationalism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983); Ralph H. Brown, "The American Geographies of Jedidiah Morse," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 31.3 (Sept. 1941): 147-217; James King Morse, *Jedidiah Morse: A Champion of New England Orthodoxy* (1939; New York: AMS Press, 1967).

4. Jedidiah Morse, *The American Geography; or, A View of the Present Situation of the United States of America* (Elizabethtown, NJ: Printed by Shepard Kollock, for the author, 1789): vi.

accounts of the United States. As the title shows, however, it was a book of geography, or the author understood it to be a combination of geography and history. "He [Morse] flatters himself, however, that the work now offered to the public, will be found to be as accurate, compleat [*sic*] and impartial as the present state of American Geography and History could furnish."[5]

A year later, moreover, Morse attempted at yet another fusion of geography and history, and this time under the title of *The History of America* (1790). In spite of its title, again, the book was half devoted to geographic and natural historical descriptions of the country, as the first chapter began with this: "America is one of the four quarters of the world, probably, the largest of the whole, and is, from its late discovery, frequently denominated the *New-World*, or *New-Hemisphere*. This vast country extends from the 80th degree of north, to the 56th degree of south, latitude; and, where its breadth is known, from the 35th to the 136th degree west longitude from London…."[6] Apparently, it didn't matter to him which name to give to his own books, geography or history. American history and geography were inseparable, with no clear line distinguishing between them. Morse might have said that they were even interchangeable with each other.

All the latter-day historians would agree with Morse and certainly admit the inseparability of American history and geography. Especially after the country acquired the Texas, Oregon and California territories in the mid-nineteenth century with the renewed possibilities for the far-reaching West, American history strengthened its geographic character ever more. John O'Sullivan's declaration of "manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions" offered a convenient model for nineteenth-century American history writing,[7] and numbers of historians demonstrated the impacts of geography upon the national development. Henry Harrisse's obsession with ancient manuscript maps in his history of the

5. Morse, *The American Geography*, v-vi.

6. Jedidiah Morse, *The History of America* vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1790): 1

7. John O'Sullivan, "Annexation," *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17 (Jul/Aug 1845): 5.

New World discovery was an obvious example of the contemporary interest in the continent itself, while O. H. Marshall shared the same passion for maps in his history of Old Northwest place names.[8] Known for his seven-volume series of American colonial history, *France and England in North America* (1865-92), Francis Parkman was a foremost geographico-historian of the day. He traveled over the country east and west, and his research trips even included geographic surveys of the historic sites (see for more details Chapters Six and Seven of the present thesis).

The list of like-minded historians would go on endlessly, but let me give one last example: Justin Winsor, a scholar-librarian of Harvard University and Boston Public Library. Winsor's historical narrative abounded with minute accounts of physical geography, heavily loaded with maps and cartographical information. Its excessive thoroughness was sometimes a target of criticism, because it was too much inclined toward geographic researches, with too little regard for political and economic aspects of American history.[9] He once admitted derisively for himself, his historical account was "a thing of shreds and

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8. Henry Harrisse, *The Discovery of North America: A Critical, Documentary, and Historic Investigation, with an Essay on the Early Cartography of the New World, Including Descriptions of Tow Hundred and Fifty Maps or Globes Existing or Lost, Constructed before the year 1536; to Which Added a Chronology of One Hundred Voyages Westward, Projected, Attempted, or Accomplished between 1431 and 1504; Biographical Accounts of the Three Hundred Pilots Who First Crossed the Atlantic; and a Copious List of the Original Names of American Regions, Caciqueships, Mountains, Islands, Capes, Gulfs, Rivers, Towns, and Harbours* (London: Henry Stevens and Son, 1892). Orsamus H. Marshall, *The Historical Writings of the Late Orsamus H. Marshall, Relating to the Early History of the West* (Albany: Joel Munsell's sons, 1887). Although Marshall's book title pretends as if this is a history of the American West, it is actually concerned with historic sites of upstate New York.

9. As for a critical commentary on Winsor's history writing, see for example, J. A. Doyle, "Reviews of Books: Narrative and Critical History of America," *The English Historical Review* 2 (Oct. 1887): 804-9. Joseph A. Borome's biography summarizes other criticisms, as well as Winsor's friendship with Francis Parkman and other contemporary historians. Winsor was a key man on the network of map mania among mid- and late-nineteenth-century American historians. See Borome, *The Life and Letters of Justin Winsor* (Doctoral Diss. Columbia University, 1950).

patches," a mosaic of geographic and cartographic data.[10] Still, he did believe as no one had ever before, that the influence of continental physiography was of crucial consequence for American history. His idea of history was best illustrated in "The Editor's Final Statement" of his *Narrative and Critical History of America*, vol. 8 (1889).

> It was further believed that the field of historical geography was more intimately connected with that of history in general than had usually been recognized; and that it was difficult to see how any period of discovery could be understood without a constant apprehension of the geographical conditions which the discoverers supposed they were dealing with.
>
> It was felt also that there is a necessary sympathy between the graphic illustrations belonging to a period under observation and the progress of its events; and that a certain wrong is done to the critical sense if other pictorial associations are established.[11]

Later on, Winsor published another geographico-history on the colonial struggle for the Mississippi basin. This was again accompanied "WITH FULL CARTOGRAPHICAL ILLUSTRATIONS FROM CONTEMPORARY SOURCES," as its title page triumphantly pronounced. Besides, he even dedicated the book to Clements Robert Markham, President of the Royal Geographical Society, London. Geography and history had never been so close as in mid- and late-nineteenth-century America. Or it might have been a happy reunion for both of them, which were originally of the same family, but had been separated so far.[12]

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10. Justin Winsor, "The Peril of Historical Narrative," *The Atlantic Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics* 65 (Sept. 1890): 297.

11. Justin Winsor, ed., *Narrative and Critical History of America*, vol. 8 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889): 509.

12. According to Katherine Clarke, geography and history has been the twin pursuits of study since the Greco-Roman era; see Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). The mid to late nineteenth century witnessed a number of dynamic interactions between the two — the historian George Bancroft, for example, founded and

Geographic concerns were, to use Winsor's words, "the pith of history."[13]

This was the state of affairs roughly when Emma Willard came on the scene of public action and championed the method of geographico-history in school education. Given that both history and geography constituted a vital part of citizenship education in the then fledging country,[14] it was only natural that the trend hit the contemporary educational community. Jedidiah Morse played an important role here again, contributing to the growing interest in geographico-history with his bestseller school textbook *Geography Made Easy* (first published in 1784; the second edition was issued in 1790 as an abridged version of his *American Geography*). Representing the educational community, Willard also followed the tradition of American geographico-history.

Still, Willard's methodology involved a step farther into the firmer consolidation of geography and history. She did not just follow the tradition, but took it to the utmost limit, so that the nature of geographico-history presented itself even more distinctly in her writings. Our next move is, then, to examine her history textbooks in comparison with other leading educators' of the day, and find what her method revealed about the combined effects of geography and history.

III. History and Geography Education in Nineteenth-Century America

The educational community turned one of the most active agents for the merging of

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presided over the American Geographical Society from 1851 to 1854 —, and they contributed each other to their professionalization as academic disciplines. As for the professionalization of geography and history, see John Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965) and Susan Schulten, *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

13. Justin Winsor, *The Mississippi Basin: The Struggle in America Between England and France, 1697-1763* (1895; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898): iii.

14. A lot of critics have argued over the relationship between geography and citizenship education. Martin Brückner's discussion on geographical literacy and national identity is most telling of all and I leaned much from it. See Brückner, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

geography and history, since they acknowledged pedagogical benefits of both subjects when taught in combination. Samuel G. Goodrich's textbook of history was typical of the kinds. The book was titled *The First Book of History, for Children and Youth* (1831; later on, renamed more aptly into *The First Book of History, Combined with Geography; Containing the History of Geography of the Western Hemisphere*). In its preface, the author explained the origin and objective of this textbook enterprise. Despite its paramount importance as a school subject, he wrote, history had never been taught properly and profitably for children and the youth; and most of its textbooks had been "but little more than extended chronological tables, and offer[ed] nothing to the reader but a tedious mass of dates, and general observation."[15] Goodrich's textbook series was to make history more attractive and useful, and for that purpose, he saw to it in organizing his volume that "the book is provided with maps, and before the pupil enters upon the history of any state or country, he is to learn from them, its shape, boundaries, rivers, shores, &c." Other textbook writers also shared the same view: while studied by itself, history tended to be arid and lacking in appeal, and it was not until combined with proper geographic instructions that it could take a grip on young students with good educational effects.[16]

Of course, this was the case the other way round: geography, too, benefited much from the cooperation with history. Just as it was of little use to memorize historic dates or great

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15. Samuel G. Goodrich, *The First Book of History, for Children and Youth* (Boston: Richardson, Lord, and Holbrook, 1831): v.

16. The renamed edition of Goodrich's *First Book of History* was issued from a different Boston publisher in 1852, with a slight addition of general topics on geography and history to the first few chapters. This is the first of a series of history textbooks: *The Second Book of History* (1832) focuses upon history of the eastern hemisphere, *The Third Book of History* (1834) upon ancient history, and both of them put a special emphasis upon geography, too. Other history textbooks I refer to here are as follows: Joseph Allen, *Easy Lessons in Geography and History, by Question and Answer: Designed for the Use of the Younger Classes in the New England Schools* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1827); William D. Swan, *First Lessons in the History of the United States: Compiled for the Use of Common Schools* (Boston: Hickling, Swan, and Brown, 1856).

men's names alone, "Geography without history is a mere blank."[17] This was because "it is impossible to conceive of events without allowing them locality, and it is unnatural to conceive of locality without supposing it to have been the theatre of some action."[18] Just like history, moreover, geography was packed with dry descriptions and forbidding technical terms, but if it was combined with historical knowledge, it suddenly turned out quite captivating and entertaining: "What renders a spot most interesting is the history of the men that have flourished there, and the deeds that have been performed there,—by *these* are Cities, Towns, and even Villages, consecrated in the eye of posterity."[19] Thus schoolteachers were strongly urged to bridge the two fields of study in class, and students soon learned to look back and forth between the history section and the geography section of a textbook. The textbook would often have some geographical Q & A's, or "questions on the map," inserted into each historical account, and encourage the young readers to consult a map and locate the sites of historical events on it.[20] Geography and history combined, the instructional method was systematized seamlessly between the two.

This fusion of history and geography brought about a couple of major consequences,

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17. Edwin Williams, *A Comprehensive System of Modern Geography and History* (New York: Bliss, Wadsworth & Co., 1835): vi.

18. Frederick Emerson, *Outlines of Geography and History, Presenting a Concise History of the World* (Philadelphia: Hogan and Thompson, 1841): 3.

19. John Evans and Archibald Forbes, *A New System of Geography and Universal History of the Known World*, Vol. 1 (London: Thomas Tegg, 1810?): vii.

Evans and Forbes's *New System of Geography and Universal History of the Known World* was published in London, but the passage I quote here appears almost verbatim (and not duly put between quotation marks) in Williams's *A Comprehensive System of Modern Geography and History*, vi.

20. "Questions on the map" can be found at the very end of each chapter in Williams's *A Comprehensive System of Modern Geography and History* and at the footnote area in Goodrich's *Book of History* series. Other textbooks also utilize similar devices one way or another and sometimes lay down rules for effective learning, such as "The *maps* should be consulted with *every* lesson," "it [history] should be taught in schools, upon the Maps of the several Geographies." See William D. Swan, *First Lessons in the History of the United States*, 161; Frederick Butler, *The Elements of Geography and History Combined*, iii.

especially to the narrative style of history. For one thing, geography gave another dimension to history, and there appeared a more spatially oriented history. Goodrich's textbook, again, offers a good example of it. What made his *First Book of History* most interesting was its introduction of spatial movement into an otherwise chronocentric historical narrative: that is to say, "supposed travels through various countries, in which he [the pupil] takes a part."[21] The reader was supposed to follow after an imaginary traveler around the world and thereby to learn about the places both geographically and historically.

Another example can be found in Frederick Butler, *The Elements of Geography and History Combined* (1825), and this is a superb one. The book did not present anything like a chronological storyline, but its contents were all arranged on, as it were, geographic order, starting with descriptions of northeastern North America, going southward chapter after chapter to the very tip of South America, and then flying to Europe, Asia, and Africa. All through the armchair world tour, geographic and historical accounts commingled with each other. At first glance, this narrative format did nothing but break down the chronological order of history but, according to the author, it instead gave a far more unifying effect to history. "The geographical descriptions of countries are so arranged in the work, as to lay the best possible foundation, and pursue the most connected train of *history*, not only of each country, but upon each grand division of the earth: so that the *history*, when *taken collectively*, may appear as one connected whole."[22] Laid out in a spatial continuity, history achieved physical wholeness and coherency. In the course of the "supposed travels" across the countries, the reader could feel history as a solid, trekkable reality.

Once history gained geographical wholeness, it wouldn't be long before it was represented visually. This was the second consequence of the fusion of geography and history, and Emma Willard's historiography amply testified to it. Just like Goodrich and

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21. Goodrich, *The First Book of History*, v. Although Goodrich remarks in the preface that the "supposed travels" are intended chiefly for the purpose of geographical instructions, yet references to historical events are found regularly in the course of "travels."

22. Frederick Butler, *The Elements of Geography and History Combined, in a Catechetical Form, for the Use of Families and School* (Wethersfield: Deming & Francis, 1825): iv.

other leading educators, Willard placed particular stress on the importance of geography to historical studies, which was already apparent in her earliest literary attempt, *Ancient Geography, as Connected with Chronology, and Preparatory to the Study of Ancient History* (1822). "Although of the three ideas, an event, its place, and date, the event is the most important," she explained in its introductory note, "yet it is the visible representation of the place, with which, for the purpose of permanent impression, we should seek to associate the other two. Hence the importance of requiring the student to examine his maps frequently, while he is studying historical facts."[23] Her belief in the efficacy of geographico-history never wavered to the very end of her career. Among other things, her use of "progressive maps" was so innovative as to develop further potentials of the combination.

Then let us take a look into Willard's *History of the United States, or Republic of America: Exhibited in Connexion with Its Chronology & Progressive Geography* (1828). As she proudly avowed later in her life, the book featured "an Atlas, containing the first series of Historical Maps ever published in this country,"[24] and each of the "Historical Maps" — or "progressive maps" as she preferred to call them elsewhere — strictly corresponded with one of the ten epochs in the history of the young nation (Figure 5). This was designed for the purpose of illustrating geographical situations of American history in chronological series.[25] Willard's "progressive maps" were not a supplementary material for locating the scenes of events narrated in the text, but rather visual images of the corresponding periods in American history.

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23. Emma Willard, *Ancient Geography, as Connected with Chronology, and Preparatory to the Study of Ancient History* (Hartford: Oliver D. Cooke & Sons, 1822): vi.

24. Emma Willard, *Guide to the Temple of Time; and Universal History, for Schools* (1849; New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1850): 12.

25. Willard's division of American history drew on the ten epochal events of her selection, such as the Columbian discovery of the New World, the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers and others. See Willard, *History of the United States, or Republic of America: Exhibited in Connexion with Its Chronology & Progressive Geography* (New York: White, Gallaher, White, 1828): 22-26.

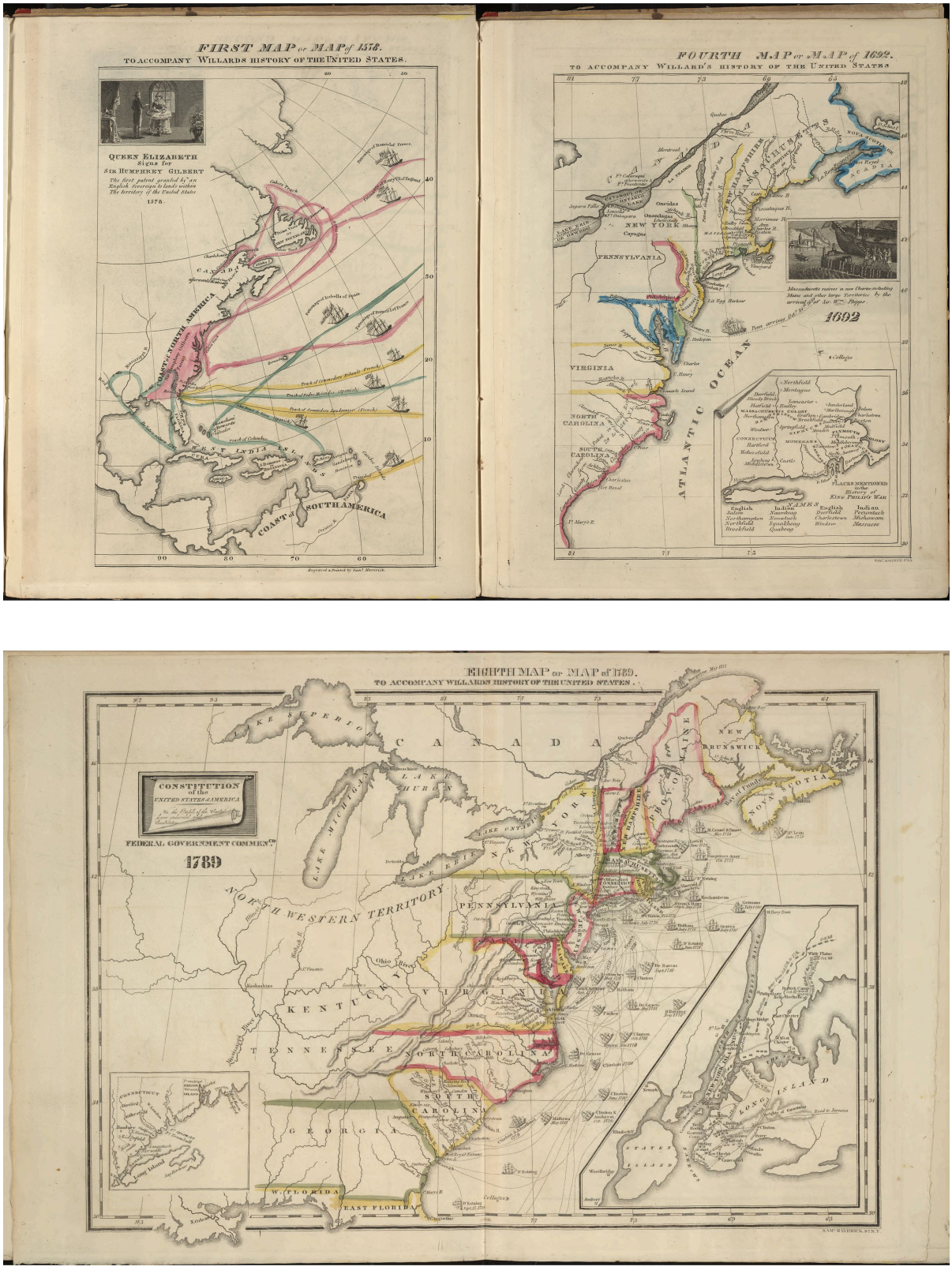

Figure 5: The first, fourth and eighth maps, collected in *A Series of Maps to* Willard's History of the United States, or Republic of America (1828)

Moreover, written accounts of Willard's *History of the United States* also made for the geographization of history. Each epoch was given an independent chapter, and at the end of which, Willard inserted "Geographical notices of the country" at the respective period, such as locations of settlements, colleges, military forts, and son on; and then she went on to encourage the reader to draw a map for each era, translating all those information on it. This is how it really worked out:

> The lesson being given out, it is expected they [the pupils] will, in addition to studying it in the book, each draw with chalk upon her board, a sketch of that part of the country which is the seat of the portion of history which the lesson contains; marking slightly the track of navigators, and march of armies…. Experience shows that it is useless to require from pupils to commit a great many dates to memory; they ought, in respect to the chronology, to be perfectly familiar with the dates of the maps; and in speaking of them, be accustomed to say, the map of 1578, or 1620, &c.[26]

Under this unique system of historical narrative, the reader was supposed to apprehend history geographically, or to use Willard's words, internalize "the picture of the map in his mind."[27] Once built in each individual's mind, then, the mental map would work as a framework of historical knowledge, so that "facts will naturally find and keep their own place in the mind, and the whole subject rest there in philosophical order."[28] In other words, geographic knowledge could put order to otherwise messy grab bag of historical facts.

Of course, Willard was an educator more than anything else, so it was not quite certain how seriously she considered history and geography as academic disciplines. She even admitted "when I commenced it [*History of the United States*], I thought merely of making a work profitable for my pupils to study as a school book. Of attempting to invest myself,

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26. Willard, *History of the United States*, v-vi.

27. Willard, *Ancient Geography*, v.

28. Emma Willard, *History of the United States, or Republic of America: With a Chronological Table and a Series of Progressive Maps*, New Edition (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1856): iii.

before the public, with the august character of historian, I thought not, until I had gone too far to recede."[29] Still, the fact remains that Willard elevated the method of geographico-history into another progressive plane. In her schematization, geography took a more vital part in history writing than before. It turned out not just useful for historical studies, but indispensable as a framework for historical knowledge.

Willard's ingenuity would go on farther, producing even more unique inventions in history writing. Given the corollary effects of "progressive maps," her history grew more and more visible to the eye. In fact, her narrative was to be put under yet another visualizing process into its final form. It was what she called "Picture of Nations," or "the Temple of Time."

IV. Visible and Timeless History: Emma Willard's "Temple of Time" and "History in Perspective"

All through her professional life, Willard was preoccupied with the visualization of history. Besides "progressive maps," for instance, she employed another pictorial illustration as a frontispiece to her *History of the United States*. It was an image of a full-grown tree, on whose trunk were inscribed the words "History of the United States," and on each branch, names of major historical events, like "1492 Columbus' Discovery," "1620 Pilgrims' Landing," and "1776 INDEPENDENCE." The tree was dubbed "the chronological tree" or "the Historic Tree," and according to Willard, it showed the plan of her historical narrative chronographically, so that the reader could see the whole course of American history at one view (Figure 6).[30]

29. Willard, *History of the United States*, iv.

30. "The Historic Tree" first appeared in the 1842 edition of *History of the United State*. Figure 6 is from the 1852 edition.

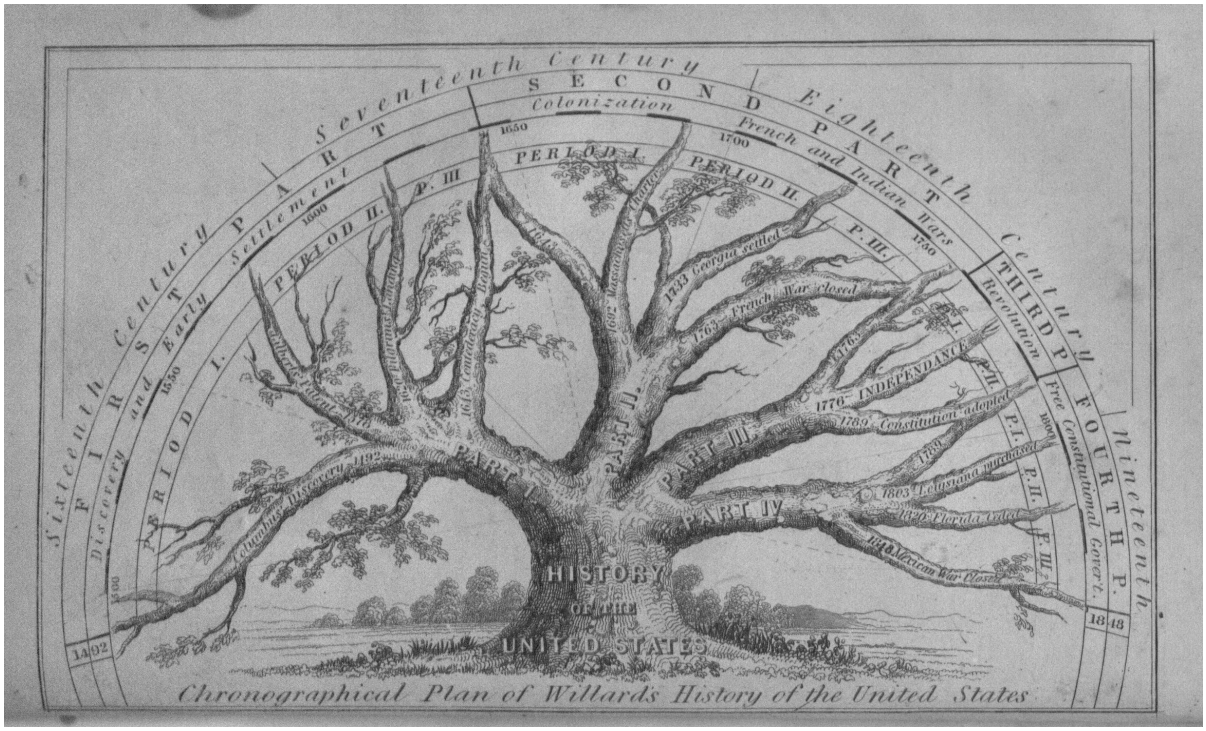

Figure 6: "The Historic Tree," a frontispiece to the new edition of Willard's *History of the United States* (1852)

Willard's ingenuity extended to universal history, too. Her pictorial method led her to produce "Picture of Nations," a graphic device to put the whole range of universal history in perspective, first published in *A System of Universal History, in Perspective: Accompanied by an Atlas, Exhibiting Chronology in a Picture of Nations, and Progressive Geography in a Series of Maps* (1835). She once pointed out that writers of universal history had followed either an ethnographical method or a chronographical one; by ethnographical, she meant the way in which each nation was described separately, and by chronographical, that of arranging historical events simply in chronological order, regardless of in which country they took place. But the truth was, according to her theory, that universal history couldn't be fully appreciated without the combination of the two methods, and that was why she revised "the chronological tree" to embrace a much wider range of periods and countries in a more systematic way. The "Picture of Nation" was the chronological tree put in perspective, its grayscale representing the degree of moral enlightenment and cultural advancement.[31] It

31. See Emma Willard, *A System of Universal History, in Perspective: Accompanied by an Atlas,*

displayed the way histories of different nations interlaced one another to form a coherent whole, and thus outlined the course of universal history from ancient times down to the present day on "a plan strictly scientific, (perspective being an exact science)."[32] Definitely, it was a novel contrivance, even scientific as Willard maintained, only it looked a bit too complicated to figure out (Figure 7).

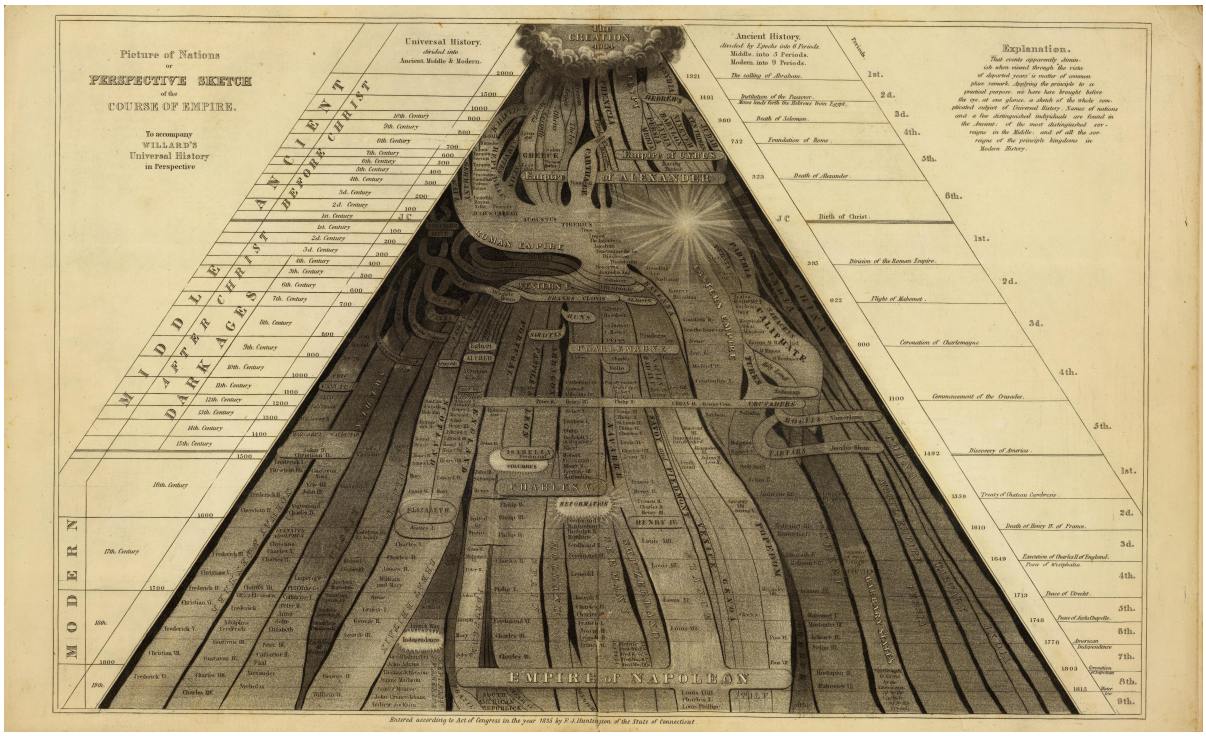

Figure 7: "Picture of Nations," first published in *A System of Universal History, in Perspective: Accompanied by an Atlas, Exhibiting Chronology in a Picture of Nations, and Progressive Geography in a Series of Maps* (1835)

And this was not the end of the story. Willard herself knew the perspective character of "Picture of Nations" was a riddle for the untrained reader, and that it had to be remade more eye-catchy. What she did next was truly innovative and even more confusing: she created a

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Exhibiting Chronology in a Picture of Nations, and Progressive Geography in a Series of Maps (1835; New York: F. J. Huntington, 1839): iv. See also Willard, *Universal History in Perspective: Divided into Three Parts, Ancient, Middle, and Modern; Illustrated by a Series of Maps and Engravings, a Chronological Table, and Map of Time* (1844; New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1857), iv.

32. Willard, *Universal History in Perspective*, iii.

colossal icon of universal history, building an imaginary "Temple of Time" (Figure 8). With the chart of "Picture of Nations" now unrolled as its floor-work, that sacred edifice of history represented each century since the Creation in its side pillars; and a close inspection further revealed the birth of Christ as a sparkling star and the Deluge as a rainbow, while the sovereign power of the time was inscribed in each century pillar, and the roof was divided lengthwise into five belts, each listing a series of names of statesmen, philosophers, theologians, poets and painters, or warriors.[33]

It was nine years after the first publication of "Picture of Nations" when Willard completed "the Temple of Time" for the revised edition of her universal history, *Universal History in Perspective: Divided into Three Parts, Ancient, Middle, and Modern; Illustrated by a Series of Maps and Engravings, a Chronological Table, and Map of Time* (1844). Sometimes she called it "Map of Time" and other times "Map of History,"[34] but in any way, she thought of it as the best form for presenting the general outline of human history. Her literary career then culminated at the World's Fair in London, 1851, when she was awarded a gold medal for this unique invention of "the Temple of Time."[35] Finally, she could be relieved to say, "When this map of time was completed, I was then satisfied that my thirty years' work was done. The goal to which, step by step, I had been approaching, was at length reached."[36]

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33. Willard, *Universal History in Perspective*, vi.

34. Emma Willard, *Guide to the Temple of Time; and Universal History, for Schools* (1849; New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1850): 11.

35. See Lutz, *Emma Willard: Daughter of Democracy*, 227-28.

36. Willard, *Guide to the Temple of Time*, 13.

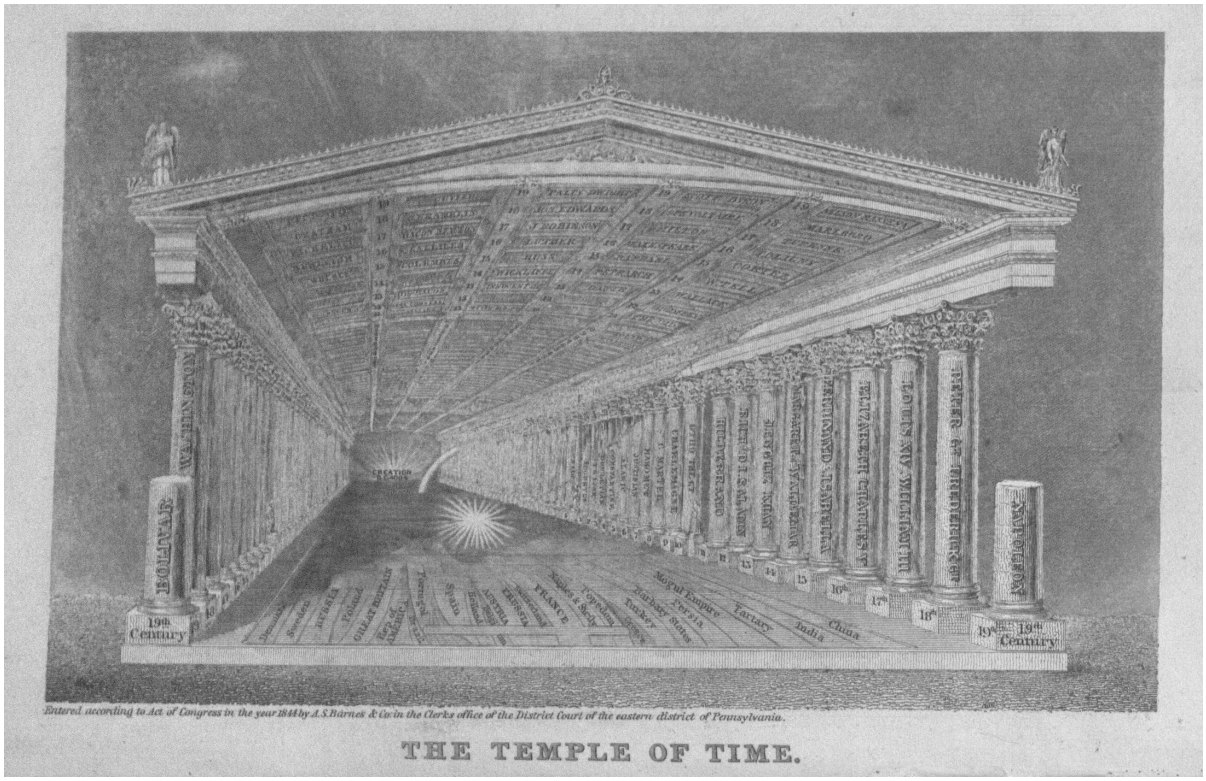

Figure 8: "The Temple of Time," a frontispiece to the revised edition of Willard's *Universal History in Perspective* (1844)

Although Willard's history writing didn't get clear of its stylistic complexity, it brought the essential properties of geographico-history into bold relief and showed what it would turn out if it was taken to the utmost limit. First of all, once in combination with geography, nineteenth-century American history writing grew so visually oriented as never before. A map was the most common visual accompaniment to a historical narrative, and numbers of historians shared a passion for map collecting or mapmaking. Willard took full advantage of cartographic visualization in her writings. From her point of view, a map was not just a supplementary tool for historical studies; but it *was* a visual image of history itself, or to be exact, she found that she could utilize the cartographic format to represent the historical course of events. She persisted in mapping and visualizing history, whether in "progressive maps," "Picture of Nations," or "the Temple of Time," in which geography and history met in perfect unity. To top it all off, she thought these devices would yield great educational benefits, too. She laid special stress on what the students learned by sight, because visual representations should leave a more lasting impression on youths than any other, installing a

mental map of history in their minds.[37]

When visualized, history turned spatialized then. As we've seen so far, history was sometimes arranged in geographic order, and some other times the reader was invited to follow an imaginary travel guide through the world. And, again, Willard tried the spatialization of history to the extreme. She translated time into space, something invisible into visible: "The Chronographer, called the Temple of Time, or *Universal* Chronographer, *is an invention by which time is measured by space, and all time since the creation of the world is indicated at once to the eye.*"[38] Thus, through the combination with geography, and through the process of visualization and spatialization, history now became something that "exhibits, *at one view, the whole scheme of universal chronology.*"[39] It was quite a convenient contrivance which allowed the reader to look over every nook of history at a single glance, although it was too complicated as well to figure out what that image meant. But, to put aside the complexity of Willard's visual history, the last development of her graphic style suggested a still more serious consequence to historical narrative itself.

Presenting history in the image of a spatial map, Willard gave it a touch of completeness or closednesss. As she aptly stated for herself, "the Temple of Time" was "The goal to which, step by step, I had been approaching," and now she was "satisfied that my thirty years' work was done." Put another way, it marked the completion of her literary enterprise, and no more development would be expected from her historical accounts. She published a couple of history books after this, to be sure, but only to underscore the end of her history writing, or more significantly, the end of history, as was implied in their titles: *Last leaves of American History: Embracing a Separate History of California* (1849), and *Last Periods of the Universal History* (1855). The linkage of history to piety was equally suggestive of the

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37. Willard, *History of the United States*, i-vii, and *Guide to the Temple of Time*, iii. Daniel H. Calhoun discusses the visualization of nineteenth-century geography and history textbooks and its relationship with the contemporary view of the world. See Calhoun, "Eyes for the Jacksonian World: William C. Woodbridge and Emma Willard," *Journal of the Early Republic* 4 (Spring 1984): 1-26.

38. Willard, *Guide to the Temple of Time*, 15.

39. Willard, *Guide to the Temple of Time*, 16.

closedness of Willard's history. Crystallized into a sacred "Temple," history now assumed a grave air of eternity and untouchableness. Nobody couldn't modify it, nor reform it, because it was a changeless and everlasting entity of godhead. Even an idea of progress would be blasphemous. Provided the obvious fact that human history is a theater of continual changes, nothing was so far from the dynamics of history as this "Temple" of timeless stasis.

This was not a freak of historiography, but rather one of the common — or generic — features of geographico-history. Of course, Willard's was an extreme case, but potentially, every geographico-history was visual, spatial and static. The father of American geographico-history, Jedidiah Morse, also drew on closedness and timeless stasis in his rendering of American history. As *The American Geography* went through several editions, Morse's emphasis shifted more into the geographical side. In the preface to the second edition, renamed *The American Universal Geography* (1793; the subsequent editions bore this title), he maintained "It has been the Author's aim to avail himself of this advantage in perfecting his work, by introducing no more history than what was thought necessary to give the reader an idea of the countries described, and by expunging what was judged of no importance to Americans, and giving in its room for such information from the best Geographical writers, and the latest and most celebrated travellers and navigators, as will be both pleasing and useful."[40] American history was thus cut back and contained in the geographical descriptions, and in the fifth edition of 1805, Morse wrote an even more striking line, which turned up right after a historical account of the establishment of the Constitution and the inauguration of President George Washington: "For several years after the establishment of the new constitution, the United States were happily distinguished by affording few materials for history."[41] It was as if the establishment of the constitution was not the beginning, but the end of history. Once history attained its goal, there was nothing to

40. Jedidiah Morse, *The American Universal Geography; or, A View of the Present State of all the Empires, Kingdoms, States, and Republics in the Known World and of the United States of America in Particular*, vol. 1 (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793): 10.

41. Jedidiah Morse, *The American Universal Geography; or A View of the Present State of all the Empires, Kingdoms, States and Republicks in the Known World, and of the United States of America in Particular,* 5th edition, vol. 1 (Boston: J. T. Buckingham, for Thomas & Andrews, 1805): 309.

be done but to keep the status quo. Keeping society changeless and uneventful was a top priority. History then ceased to be a story of dynamic possibilities, but turned out a story of static, if manifest, destiny.[42]

Paradoxically, American geographico-history represented the world's history as a closed and limited order. Other geographico-histories, too, attested to it one way or another. As noted earlier in this chapter, some texts invited the reader to an imaginary travel over the world, and the reader found that there were so many places to visit in the world and innumerable things to learn about their histories. And yet, the trip would end sooner or later, that was for sure; for, the world was finite, no matter how spacious it might seem. Hence the end of travel, and the end of history. Projecting history onto an essentially limited spatial expanse, geographico-history confined history into a closed circuit. Once it was closed, it gained spatial coherency and wholeness, but lost the historical dynamics. Geographico-history ended up typically in a static and closed image of completion.

V. The Problem of American Historicity

Willard prepared a series of progressive maps for her *System of Universal History*, and published them separately as *Atlas, to Accompany a System of Universal History* (1836). As well as those for her *History of the United States*, the maps presented the course of universal history quite dramatically, but the overall effect was to portray the world as somewhat more closed and static (Figure 9). The *Atlas* began with the image of the world in 1921 B.C., in which only a part of Mesopotamia and the northern Nile basin peeked out, while most of the world was hidden under the cover of the dark clouds. The progressive maps went on to show the break of the clouds getting wider and wider as time rolled on; the map of the "Christian Era" showed the most of Eurasia out under the sun, although Asia had few place names inscribed on it; and the map of 1492 A.D. added the new continents to the world, as the clouds were dispelled from Africa and North America. These maps dramatized how (the Western) people had purged the clouds of ignorance and illuminated the world with the

42. As for the concept of timelessness and ahistoricity of American history, see Jehlen, *American Incarnation*.

light of geographic knowledge. Still, this was only a story of revelation. What was assumed here was that the world had never been changed essentially since its creation, but that it had been only revealed in the course of time. And more to the purpose of the present discussion, Willard's *Atlas* ended right after the map of 1492 A.D., and thus emphasized the discovery of the New World as the culmination of universal history. America was, as it were, the fulfillment of the world's destiny, marking the very end of history. America, the completion of history, and period.

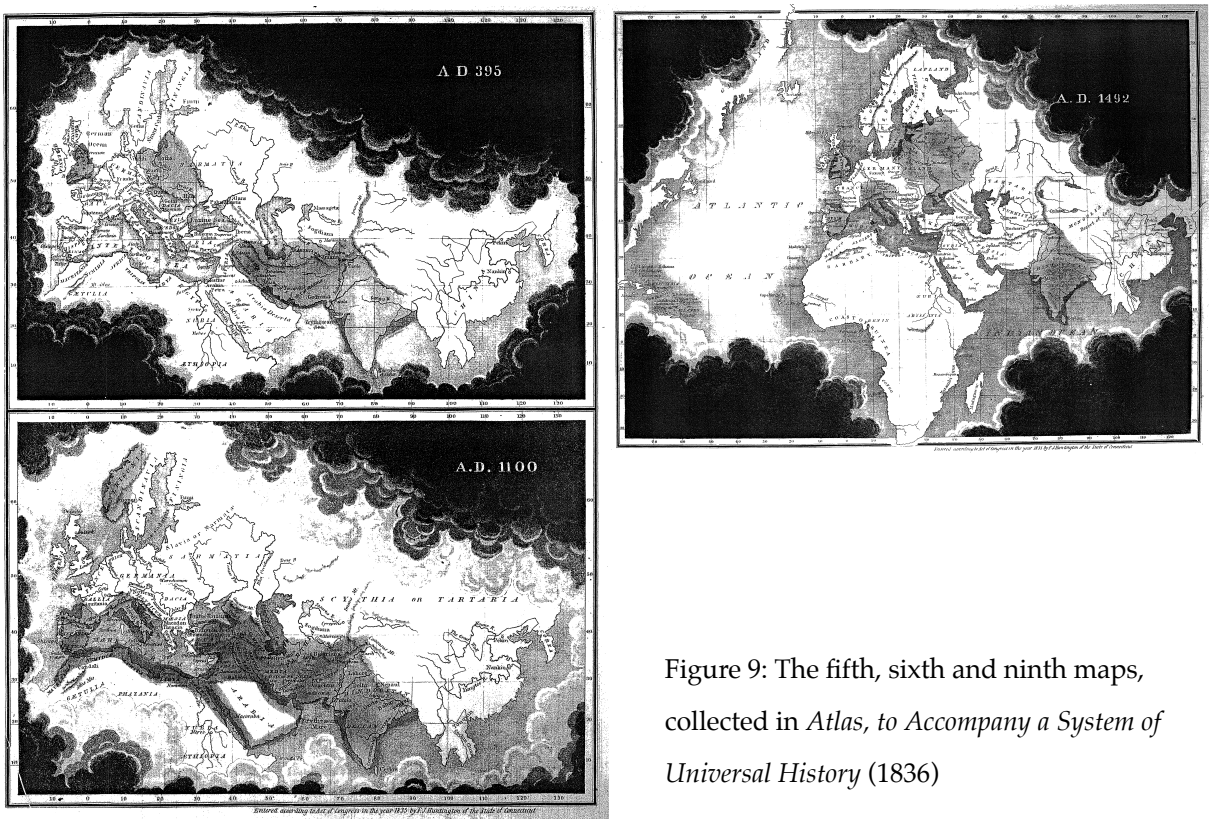

Figure 9: The fifth, sixth and ninth maps, collected in *Atlas, to Accompany a System of Universal History* (1836)

Since its discovery, according to Myra Jehlen, America had been a geographical entity: "the decisive factor shaping the founding conceptions of 'America' and of 'the American' was material rather than conceptual; rather than a set of abstract ideas, the physical fact of the continent."[43] The concept of liberal individualism and democratic government was first proposed in Europe, but it remained only ideal, never set rooted firmly there under the influence of historical fluctuations. The idea could be "incarnated" only in the American soil.

43. Jehlen, *American Incarnation*, 3.

America was the embodiment of the liberal ideal, long nurtured but never materialized in Europe. And once the goal was attained, history was completed.

This "ideology of incarnation" worked effective especially in nineteenth-centruy America. The territorial expansion promised the glorious future for America, but it also implied a sort of imperial anxiety — fear of the inevitable decline, just as was exampled in European history. This was why American historians tried hard to exempt themselves from historical vicissitude, and geographico-history was an attempt at presenting America as a totally new nation, geographized and spatialized — or incarnated — upon the soil. "America marked not only the beginning of a 'New Heaven and a New Earth' but also an absolute, atemporal order of truth and justice. It stood at once as the culmination of progress and end to progress, fulfillment of history and emancipation from history. Unfolding in time, America remained ultimately timeless."[44] Once the human progress culminated with the establishment of America, the course of history had to stop so that America could stay at the meridian of universal history. Otherwise the next move would be a fatal fall from the top of the world.

The idea of incarnation or spatialization was not the total negation of history itself, however. It was a gesture of disconnection from the former (Old-World) course of history, and a start-over of history in a new way. Nineteenth-century American geographico-history had American history spatialized over the continental expanse, setting up an image of the completion of the old European model of history. A fit metaphor for the new alternative vision of history was found in the very American soil: geological deep time. Instead of a story tracing back to the other side of the Atlantic, America sought its own unique history deep beneath the ground, to be grafted onto the geological history of the landmass.

Francis Parkman was one of the major agents promoting the geographic and geological arrangement of American history writing. Not a simple extension of European history, his history was a story of the American wilderness, with its axis of temporality wedged vertically into the buried layers of memories of place.

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44. Wai-chee Dimock, *Empire for Liberty: Melville and the Poetics of Individualism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989): 14.

Part III

Francis Parkman

Francis Parkman's Historical Writings: An Overview

In Part I and Part II, we have discussed the two essential components of early American history writing: scientific objectivity and natural history. With these general frameworks in mind, we move on to examine a case of Francis Parkman (1823-1893), a focal point on which all the foregoing considerations converge.

Parkman was a rightful heir to the historiographical tradition in nineteenth-century America. For one thing, he was another Boston-native historian, closely tied to Jared Sparks, Justin Winsor and other documentary historians there. He himself inherited the method of descriptive detailedness and solid factuality based on the collection of historical documents. His interest in the American wilderness, for another, made his history quite pervious to natural historical concerns. As I touched upon in the last chapter, he took an active part in the contemporary school of geographico-history, and his idea of history went a step even further, or to be exact, a step deeper under the ground, where the renewed sense of temporality was found working as geological deep time. To the purpose of the present thesis, Parkman's history writing marked the climax of the early developments of American historiography.

Among other nineteenth-century American historians or those whom David Levin calls "romantic historians," Parkman is the most commented by modern critics, and a fair amount of scholarly literature is available about his life and writings.[1] The Library of America editions of *France and England in North America* also help us to get familiar with his narrative of the North American colonial explorations and warfare. Still, it is no less true that even his books have been long relegated to relative, if not total, obscurity, measured by the standard of the contemporary masterpieces of American Renaissance and late-nineteenth-century

1. David Levin's pathbreaking analysis of the nineteenth-century American historians is still a reference point in this field of study. Besides Parkman, Levin names William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859), George Bancroft (1800-1891), John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877) under the heading of "romantic historian." See Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (1959; New York: A Harbinger Book, 1963).

literary realism. Before entering into details, then, a brief survey of his histories might be helpful as a preliminary to the main discussions that follow. A summary of critical commentaries, too, will be of use to clarify how and in what terms Parkman's histories have been assessed at all.

Parkman's historical series consists of eight titles or fifteen separate volumes in total, which can be divided into three parts, depending on the historical phase each group covers. (The quotations from these texts are cited with the abbreviated titles and page numbers in parentheses in the following discussions.)

I. The French Explorations into the North American Wilderness

Pioneers of France in the New World (*PF*, 1865; revised in 1885)

The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century (*JS*, 1867)

La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West (*LS*, 1869; revised in 1878)

II. The Decline of New France and the Ascendancy of New England

The Old Régime in Canada (*OR*, 1874; revised in 1893)

Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV (*CF*, 1877)

A Half-Century of Conflict (*HC*, 1892)

Montcalm and Wolfe (*MW*, 1884)

III. The Ruin of the American Indian

The Conspiracy of Pontiac (*CP*, 1851; revised in 1870)

The first three books deal with the New World expeditions by the French explorers and missionaries. *Pioneers of France in the New World* begins with a quick review of the Spanish discovery of Florida in the early sixteenth century, and the first half of the book relates the Huguenots' thwarted attempts at the colonization of Florida through the mid- to the late-sixteenth century, while the second half features the early French adventures in Quebec and the surrounding areas. *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century* in turn

highlights the hardships and martyrdom of the Jesuit missionaries, who Parkman claims were indefatigable ethnologist explorers describing the North American wilderness and its inhabitants, as well as earnest evangelists setting out for the conversion of the benighted Indians. The exploration narratives culminate in the third volume, *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, which follows the tracks of a heroic explorer, Robert Cavelier de la Salle, from the upper Great Lakes down through the Illinois to the mouth of the Mississippi in the late seventeenth century.

The second cluster of the series dramatizes the rise and fall of New France and its final surrender to the British power. *The Old Régime in Canada* sets the stage with a general survey of the economic, social, civil, and religious life of the French colony, and appraises its achievements and problems from an institutional perspective. In Parkman's schematization, the French colonial polity embodied the artificial and corrupt power of Catholicism and absolutism, which first held the hegemony in the North American colony, but was destined to give way to the natural fortitude of British Protestantism and liberalism. Although *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV* covers the heyday of the colonial French rule in the seventeenth century, it is also an account of the way how its inner conflict between state and church subtly undermined its own grip on the New World, and the story, punctuated with a series of frontier skirmishes, winds up into the British capture of Port Royal, Acadia, in 1690, which marked the beginning of the end of New France. While the French forces won the ensuing battle of Quebec in the same year, its ultimate collapse was incumbent and unavoidable as the conflict continued well into the mid-eighteenth century. *A Half-Century of Conflict* centers on another contested spot, Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, and ends up with the British siege and capture of Fort Louisbourg in 1745 (though it was soon receded back to France under the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle of 1748). And *Montcalm and Wolfe* finally wraps up the story of the fall of New France, which received a fatal blow with the surrender of Quebec in 1759 and even the failure to retake the town next year. All that is left then is an epilogue to the whole series, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, which, according to Parkman, aims to recount subsequent impacts of "The conquest of Canada" and "the advancing waves of Anglo-American power" on the North American continent, or in his own words, "to portray

the American forest and the American Indian at the period when both received their final doom" (*CP*, 347).

This version of colonial North American history, critics generally agree, duly meets today's scholarly standards, and assuredly is more tenable than those of other nineteenth-century historians, such as William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859) and John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877), who are, to use Mason Wade's words, "stiff and wooden, and are read only as romance and rhetoric." Wade goes on to evaluate Parkman's prescience and the historical objectivity of his stories: "much research and investigation has shaken only details and not the broad conclusions of Parkman's work in the field which he has cleared as a pioneer, and his pages still live, as do those of no other nineteenth-century historian, for the modern reader."[2] The seven-title series, or the eight-title saga if the epilogue is counted in, looks forbidding for the general reader, to be sure. But John Tebbel's one-volume abridgment of *France and England in North America*, first published in 1948, has run into several editions (the latest issue was in 2001),[3] and this sufficiently testifies to the verity and durability of Parkman's historical accounts and their relevancy for popular education, as well as academic studies, on America's colonial past.

Since their initial publications, Parkman's histories have enjoyed much critical acclaim especially in two aspects. For one thing, he has always been praised for his vivid descriptive style, which creates an illusion of participation, so the readers may feel as if they were witnessing a historical event on the very spot for themselves. Howard Doughty ascribes this effect of vivification to Parkman's motor-minded, "kinesthetic" prose or its "quality of seeming itself to *be* the action it describes."[4] In addition, Parkman's highly graphic descriptions are also legitimated by his thorough archival research as well as his personal experiences of visiting historic sites. Another strain of public commendations of Parkman's

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2. Mason Wade, *Francis Parkman: Heroic Historian* (1942; Hamden: Archon Books, 1972): v-vi.

3. John Tebbel's abridgment of Parkman's histories, titled *The Battle for North America*, was first published by Doubleday in 1948, and the major reprints were issued from Easton Press, Norwalk, Connecticut in 1987, and Phoenix Press, London in 2001.

4. Howard Doughty, *Francis Parkman* (1962; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983): 97.

writings centers on his masterful wielding of literary motifs and themes. One of the recurring ideas all through his narratives is the Romantic perseverance and struggle of colonial explorers and troopers in the midst of the ruthless wilderness, and, as David Levin and other critics point out, those heroic figures are agents of the universal progress of liberty, which, as *the* pervading principle of Parkman's histories, lies behind the fundamental dichotomies featured in them, such as naturalness *v.* artificialness, Protestantism *v.* Catholicism, liberty *v.* absolutism, and the like.[5] These evaluations are fair enough, and I totally agree to them as far as they are concerned with Parkman's descriptive and narrative style. Still, it is surprising that nobody has yet delved into the intellectual and methodological framework of his historical writings, except for the formative influences of Romantic literature — Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, James Fenimore Cooper, among others — on his dramatic design. His philosophy of history, as it were, has been left untouched, although it actually deserves much attention, considering his unique handling of historical changes, which are represented throughout his histories characteristically in a spatial (both horizontal and vertical) manner.

In Part III, I will focus on Parkman's method of historical representation or his idea of history. His obsessive passion for travel and the Indians attests to the implication of his

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5. As for a general discussion on the grand themes of nineteenth-century romantic history, see Levin, *History as Romantic Art*, 24-45, and for a more detailed examination, see Part Two of the same book, 47-159. Howard Doughty, too, discusses the fundamental conflict of civilization and savagery, the present and the past, and liberty and despotism in Parkman's histories. See Doughty, *Francis Parkman*, 188-96 specifically.

In his introduction to *Pioneers of France*, Parkman himself referred to what he saw as the major dichotomies in the colonial era.

> By name, local position, and character, one of these communities of freemen stands forth as the most conspicuous representative of this antagonism, — Liberty and Absolutism, New England and New France. The one was the offspring of a triumphant government; the other, of an oppressed and fugitive people: the one, an unflinching champion of the Roman Catholic reaction; the other, a vanguard of the Reform. Each followed its natural laws of growth, and each came to its natural result. (*PF*, 14)

historiography with natural historical enterprises. His history writing is predominantly geographic, cartographic, and thus visual, moreover. The best moments in his historical accounts are narrated panoramically from a higher platform to grasp a historical course of events at one view. Even if he arranges historical scenes spread on a flat geographic expanse, however, his panoramic representation has a dimension of depth underneath, in which he inscribes the vestiges of historical changes. His idea of history is closely related with American nature, but the nature in his writings is not the static and atemporal order of being, a typical image of nature which had long been featured in the Western intellectual tradition since the ancient period, but the mobilized and temporalized one, a constantly mutable world that was suggested by modern geology in the late eighteenth century and later on confirmed by Darwinism.

Chapter Six

The Traveling Historian: Spatiality and the Geographic Order of Francis Parkman's Writings

I. A Traveling Historian

All throughout his literary career, Francis Parkman had been a traveling historian of "American forest." According to his so-called autobiographical letter, which he wrote twice to his close friends in the melodramatic third person, he first aspired to be a historian when he was fifteen or sixteen years old, and this ambition had its roots in his strong and long-standing passion for the forest: "He [Parkman] became enamoured of the woods, a fancy which soon gained full control over the course of the literary pursuits to which he was also addicted. After the usual boyish phases of ambitious self-ignorance, he resolved to confine his homage to the Muse of History, as being less apt than her wayward sisters to requite his devotion with a mortifying rebuff."[1] Soon after entering Harvard College, his double interest in history and forest was fully coalesced into a specific project: a plan of writing the story of "the whole course of the American conflict between France and England; or, in other words, the history of American forest; for this was the light in which I regarded it" (*Letters,* 1: 184n). Parkman, whose reliance "was less on books than on such personal experience as should, in some sense, identify him with his theme" (*Letters*, 1: 176), frequently visited historic sites deep in the American wilderness, and his sylvan research tour provided significant evidence and knowledge for his North American colonial history. For him, colonial America was a land of the woods, and its history that of people and the forest, just like Jeremy Belknap's story of *The Foresters*.

Parkman's history owed its form and method, as well as its contents, to travel and forest. Its chief focus was upon the vast American wilderness, and the story unfolded itself, literally ranging all over the primeval rocks and woods. His "history of American forest" was a

1. Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *Letters of Francis Parkman*, vol. 1 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960): 176. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with the abbreviated title, *Letters*, volume numbers, and page number in parentheses.

spatially oriented history, in which the geographic settings were most foregrounded among other components, and travel, such as military marches and frontier expeditions, worked as a main frame of the narrative. It then makes best sense to discuss his history writing in terms of its emphasis on American geography and the spatial migration over the continent. Parkman's first two texts specifically should be read together: *The Oregon Trail* (first serialized in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* from February 1847 to February 1849, and published in book form in 1849), a travelogue of his own trek through the wild West, for one, and *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851), his initial attempt at history writing, for the other. Once the two texts are examined as a pair, it will prove clear that his history writing internalized the method of travel writing within itself.

Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* has been assessed so far roughly in three ways. For some critics, the travelogue is a practice of taming the otherwise wild Western scenes in the manner of picturesque aesthetics, and for others, a record of the restoration and regeneration of white male masculinity through the backwoods trip.[2] On top of these readings, moreover, most critics agree that the book is a literary paean to the territorial expansion and the mass expulsion of the indigenous tribes in nineteenth-century America.[3] What is common to all

2. As for the relationship between Parkman's history writing and picturesque aesthetic, see Kris Lackey, Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory and the Nineteenth-Century Traveler in Trans-Allegheny America: F. Trollope, Dickens, Irving and Parkman," *American Studies* 32 (Spring 1991): 33-48; and Joseph L. Tribble, "The Paradise of the Imagination: The Journeys of *The Oregon Trail*," *New England Quarterly* 46 (1973): 523-42. The restoration of masculinity through the wild West trip is discussed in Frank M. Meola, "A Passage Through 'Indians': Masculinity and Violence in Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail*," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 13 (1999): 5-25; and Phillip G. Terrie, "The Other Within: Indianization on *The Oregon Trail*," *New England Quarterly* 64 (1991): 376-9.

3. See, for example, Richard C. Vitzthum, *The American Compromise: Theme and Method in the Histories of Bancroft, Parkman, and Adams* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974); Stephen P. Knadler, "Francis Parkman's Ethnography of the Brahmin Caste and *The History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac*," *American Literature* 65.2 (June 1993): 215-38; Francis Jennings, "Francis Parkman: A Brahmin among Untouchables," *William and Mary Quarterly* 42.3 (July 1985): 305-28, and *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); and L. Hugo Moore, "Francis Parkman on the Oregon Trail: A Study in Cultural Prejudice,"

the three interpretations is that Parkman had never been free from his native Boston Brahmin views anytime and anywhere, no matter how much emphasis he ostensibly put on the direct, firsthand investigations of local historic sites. He cast an inexcusably prejudiced glance at the Indians and frontiersmen. To anticipate my final analysis, his "history of American forest" involved a gesture of appropriation of the past of the American land and its indigenous people into the official history of white imperial nationhood. If not an outright deception, it missed the stories seen from the other side.

Parkman had his own limit in scope. Still, I believe, his historical texts deserve reevaluation in the context of the generic development of American history writing. My main purpose of this chapter is to point out the significance of Parkman's travel as a unifying framework of history writing. Putting *The Oregon Trail* and *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* in juxtaposition, we will classify the twin texts under the genre of "the literature of place," which had produced a number of writings on the American land since the Revolutionary era through the mid-nineteenth century. Parkman's history writing was a direct offspring of this natural historical genre, and American national history itself, I argue, evolved out of American natural history.

II. Parkman's Research Trip for History Writing

Although Parkman made up his mind to be a historian quite early in his boyhood, it was after meeting his mentor, Jared Sparks, at Harvard that his idea got crystalized into a specific project of North American colonial history.[4] Sparks, as we saw in Chapter Two, was one of the earliest American historians who made the most of primary source studies. Along with

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Western American Literature 12.3 (1977): 185-97.

4. See Mason Wade, ed., *The Journals of Francis Parkman*, vol. 1 (1947; New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969): xi; and Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *Letters of Francis Parkman,* vol. 1 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960): xxxiv-xxxv. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with the abbreviated title, *Journals*, volume numbers, and page number in parentheses.

Parkman dedicated his first history book, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, to Sparks, "AS A TESTIMONIAL OF HIGH PERSONAL REGARD, AND A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT FOR HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICES TO AMERICAN HISTORY" (*CP*, 344).

other institutional, as well as individual, efforts of document hunting in the nineteenth century, his exhaustive collection and collation of historical materials helped set the standards for archival research of the day. Parkman, as a direct disciple of Sparks, fully understood the importance of original sources in the writing of history. He started his life-long pilgrimage through the scenes of American colonial history as early as 1841 when he was still a freshman at college. This was for the most part a series of research trips for his future *tour de force*, and he traveled over the country east and west to have interviews with the locals as well as to hunt for archival resources.[5] As he later proclaimed, his history writing had been made out of his personal experience of the subject itself: "I have visited and examined every spot where events of any importance in connection with the contest took place, and have observed with attention such scenes and persons as might help to illustrate those I meant to describe. In short, the subject has been studied as much from life and in the open air as at the library table" (*MW*, 842). A significant part of his primary sources consisted of the field experience of historic sites.

His journey on the Oregon trail was one of such historical research trips. His main purpose was to know by experience the real lives of the Indians, who took a key part in his history of the tripartite conflict in colonial North America. A year before the departure, Parkman confessed in a letter that while he had read all the secondary works on the Indians, "their character will always remain more or less of a mystery to one who does not add practical observation to his closet studies. In fact, I am more than half resolved to devote a few months to visiting the distant tribes" (*Letters*, 1: 23).[6] *The Oregon Trail*, as he claimed, was "a record of the progress of this design," that is, "observing the Indian character" right in the midst of the tribesmen (*OT*, 111). And then his observations during the trip were duly incorporated into his colonial history series, especially his next publication, *The Conspiracy of*

5. Mason Wade notes that Parkman's historical method consisted of exhaustive archival research and traveling around historic sites for himself. See Wade, *Francis Parkman: Heroic Historian* (1942; Hamden: Archon Books, 1972): 447-52.

6. See also Parkman's letters to Lyman C. Draper, dated December 23, 1845 and January 21, 1846, reprinted in *Letters*, 1: 31-33.

Pontiac. In its preface, he repeated the same point again: "It is evident that other study than that of the closet is indispensable to success in such an attempt…. [B]y the camp-fire, or in the canoe, I gained familiar acquaintance with men and scenery of the wilderness. In 1846, I visited various primitive tribes of the Rocky Mountains, and was, for a time, domesticated in a village of the western Dahcotah, on the high plains between Mount Laramie and the range of the Medicine Bow" (*CP*, 347).

For Parkman, travel itself was synonymous with research, as far as it gave him a sort of field knowledge and opportunities to get practically acquainted with "men and scenery of the wilderness." Taking the importance of archival research for granted, he went one step further to experience and identify with his own subject, the American forest and people who used to range there. This firsthand experience of prowling in the wild did not just provide primary source data, but it even informed his idea of how to write a history. It formed the core framework of his writing.[7]

Travel made up Parkman's history writing both in its form and contents. Let us now examine *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, which featured the geographic configuration of historical

7. Mason Wade, the editor of Parkman's journals, insists on the prime importance of the Oregon Trail journal as a historical document, and goes on to downrate the published text of *The Oregon Trail* as only secondary to his other writings (See Wade, ed., *Journals*, 2: 385-404). Predictably, this view has aroused much criticism. See, for example, E. N. Feltskog, "Editor's Introduction," in Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969): 11a-75a.

As for the significance of travel for Parkman's history writing, many critics have pointed out that the field experience of many historic sites brought forth his vivid descriptive style, but its full import as a framework of his historical narrative has not been discussed. Contemporary reviewers in *North American Review*, *Atlantic Monthly* and others also had drawn attention to such descriptive vividness as if he were narrating right on the spot of a historical scene. See for example, "Reviews ad Literary Notices," *The Atlantic Monthly* 16 (October 1865): 505-10; "Reviews and Literary Notices," *The Atlantic Monthly* 25 (January 1870): 122-24; "Recent Literature," *The Atlantic Monthly* 27 (April 1871): 522-23; William Dean Howells, "Mr. Parkman's Histories," *The Atlantic Monthly* 34 (November 1874): 602-10; "Mr. Parkman's Montcalm and Wolfe," *The Atlantic Monthly* 55 (February 1885): 265-70; James Russell Lowell, "Francis Parkman," *The Century Magazine: A Popular Quarterly* 45 (November 1892): 44-45; John Fiske, "Francis Parkman," *The Atlantic Monthly* 73 (May 1894): 664-74; and Henry C. Vedder, *American Writers of To-day* (1894: Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1972).

events and the spatial migration of people on it.

III. The Spatiality of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*

The Indians constituted a central part of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, so such field knowledge of their lives as Parkman had obtained on the Oregon trail was crucial to the vivid and specific depiction of them. At the very beginning of the book, however, he highlighted a rather stiff and lifeless representation of the Indians. That is, a set of ethnographical specimens of the Indians showcased in the book's first chapter, "Indian Tribes East of the Mississippi."

Simply put, the Indians in the first chapter were the Indians abstracted into the static type samples. An Iroquois village described there, for one, was not a specific village set in a specific locality, but a generalized model of it, the one most likely to be found in the North Eastern woods. Here below is a passage about such a model village and its housing style.

> The area which these defences enclosed was often several acres in extent, and the dwellings, ranged in order within, were sometimes more than a hundred feet in length. Posts, firmly driven into the ground, with an intervening framework of poles, formed the basis of the structure; and its sides and arched roof were closely covered with layers of elm bark. Each of the larger dwellings contained several distinct families, whose separate fires were built along the central space, while compartments on each side, like the stalls of a stable, afforded some degree of privacy. Here, rude couches were prepared, and bear and deer skins spread; while above, the ripened ears of maize, suspended in rows, formed a golden tapestry. (*CP,* 370)

The typical plan of an Iroquois village, the typical interior and exterior designs of the dwellings, and other typical household details were enumerated one after another. Elsewhere followed the further descriptions of general customs and manners of the Indian tribes, such as their languages, religious beliefs, and system of government (See Table 1). This was as if the whole chapter were a series of explanatory sketches tagged on to museum

Indian Tribes East of the Mississippi (*CP*, 359-89)

I. General Characteristics of the Indian Customs and Manners
  1. Tribal divisions and the mode of government
  2. Totem
II. The Iroquois Family
  1. Their territory and geographic position
  2. Their political organization
  3. The origin of the confederacy
  4. Their myths, legends and religion
  5. Their manner of living, housing style
  6. Their manner of warfare and festivity
  7. Their native pride
  8. The allied tribes
  9. The growing prevalence of the Iroquois tribes
III. The Algonquins Family
  1. Their vast territory
  2. The territory of each tribe
  3. Their conflict with the Iroquois
  4. Their manner of living
  5. Their myths, legends and religion
IV. General Descriptions of the Indian Character
  1. The inconsistencies of the Indians
  2. Their intellectual traits

Table 1: The Outline of "Indian Tribes East of the Mississippi," Chapter 1 of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*

displays. Or, in other words, the purpose of the whole chapter was to sample the different aspects of the tribal life and systematize them into a general order. Indeed, the process of sampling and systematization was possible only with exhaustive archival and field research that Parkman highly regarded, but what we now find somewhat strange is that these specimen descriptions continue for a good many pages as an opening chapter of a historical text.[8] (In passing, *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century* (1867), the second installment of *France and England in North America* series, also opened with a similar

8. The first edition of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* was titled *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac, and the War of the North American Tribes against the English Colonies after the Conquest of Canada*.

descriptive survey of the Indian tribes.) We are at a loss how to understand the non-narrative, matter-of-fact records of the Indians, just as every reader of *Mody-Dick* is baffled about the "Etymology" and "Extracts" sections.

While writing *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, Parkman sent out quite a few letters of inquiry to the experts in a then newly establishing discipline, ethnology.[9] On July 21, 1850, for example, he wrote to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, one of the founding members of the American Ethnological Society, to ask about the totemic practices of the Algonquins, and what he learned from the correspondence fleshed out the first chapter of the book (*Letters* 1: 75).[10] Moreover, his repeated references through the entire volume to famous contemporary ethnologists — Schoolcraft, Albert Gallatin, and Ephraim George Squier, to name a few — attested to his familiarity with contemporary ethnological discussions.[11] Evidently, his descriptive sketches of the aboriginal lives were a product of the findings of American ethnology of the day. His method of sampling and systematization derived from that of ethnological cataloging and classification (See Table 2 and compare the above-noted outline of Parkman's introductory chapter with the general plan of Scoolcraft's Indian ethnology series, which "is designed to submit an authentic body of materials, illustrative of the history, manners and customs, languages, and intellectual capacity and character of the

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9. American Ethnological Society was founded in 1842 by Albert Gallatin and John Russell Bartlett.

10. See also Mason Wade, *The Journals of Francis Parkman* 2 vols. (1947; New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969): 400-01.

Parkman refuted Schoolcraft's study of the Indian tribes in his review article, "Indian Superstitions," *The North American Review* 103 (July 1866): 1-18.

11. After the completion of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* in May 1851, Parkman sent copies to the ethnologists who had helped him to write (see *Letters,* 1: 88. 89), and even asked them to mention his book at the meeting of the American Ethnological Society (see *Letters*, 1: 80-81)

In his autobiographical novel, *Vassall Morton* (1856), Parkman portrayed his hero as the one who had been motivated by ethnological inquiries since his youth, and "clinched his long-cherished purpose, devoting himself to ethnology for the rest of his days." See Parkman, *Vassall Morton* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1856): 37.

whole number of tribes now within the territorial boundaries of the United States").[12]

"Division of the Subject"
I. General History
II. Manners and Customs
III. Antiquities of the United States
IV. Physical Geography of the Indian Country
V. Tribal Organization, History, and Government
VI. Intellectual Capacity and Character
VII. Topical History
VIII. Physical Type of the Indian Race
IX. Language
X. State of Indian Art
XI. Present Condition and Future Prospects
XII. Daemonology, Witchcraft, and Magic
XIII. Medical Knowledge
XIV. Literature of the Indian Language
XV. Population and Statistics

Table 2: "Division of the Subject" in Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States,* 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Company, 1851-57). The list above is from the third volume, page ix.

This methodological relationship with ethnology suggested at least two things about Parkman's history writing. The first one was concerned with its aspect of timelessness. Abstracted out of a historical context as a type sample, the ethnological Indian always partook of timeless immutability. In fact, Schoolcraft strongly stressed the fixity and invariableness of the Indian race in his general introduction to *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (1851-57). "Of all races on the face of the earth," he claimed, "they [the Indians] have,

12. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Company, 1852): xiv.

apparently, changed the least; and have preserved their physical and mental type, with the fewest alterations," and most probably, they would remain the same as it was, "as if they were bound by the iron fetters of an unchanging type."[13] And toward the end of the first chapter of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, Parkman also represented the Indians as unchanging and timeless as if he paraphrased Schoolcraft's words: "Some races of men seem moulded in wax, soft and melting, at once plastic and feeble. Some races, like some metals, combine the greatest flexibility with the greatest strength. But the Indian is hewn out of a rock. You can rarely change the form without destruction of the substance" (*CP*, 389). The immutability of Parkman's Indians was confirmed by his methodological anachronism, too. He made up his mind to go to live among the Western tribes on the Oregon Trail, because he thought the experience would give him practical knowledge of the Indian life *in the colonial era*. He deliberately conflated the contemporary Dahcotah Indians with the historic Iroquois and Algonquins, and he found no problem in doing so. For him, whether in the seventeenth century or the eighteenth, the Indians displayed all the same characteristics of his days.[14]

The prose style of the first chapter was tinged with the same anachronism. Mostly, the first chapter was written in the past tense, but as it went on for a while, there intermittently showed up present-tense descriptions, which continued for some paragraphs. Parkman thus blurred the distinction deliberately in his portrayal of the Indians' lives between the past and the present. Explaining the Ojibwas' mode of life, for instance, he started with a past-tense account to state that "they *were* far more rude than the Iroquois, or even the southern Algonquin tribes," but soon the passage turned into the present tense: "In the calm days of summer, the Ojibwa fisherman *pushes* out his birch canoes upon the great inland ocean of the north; and, as he *gazes* down into the pellucid depths, he *seems* like one balanced between earth and sky" (italics mine; *CP*, 382-83). The ethnological features of the Ojibwas noted here

13. Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Company, 1851): 15.

14. Of course, the Indians had not been immutable. Here was the limit to Parkman's and contemporary ethnology's point of view. Of all, Francis Jennings is the most critical of Parkmanesque stereotype of the Indian "hewn out of a rock." See Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, vii and 3-42. The implications of the "rock" image of the Indian are the central concern of Chapter Eight of this thesis.

did not belong to any specific age. Instead, they were represented as the universal truths of their lives once, now and forever.

Once ethnologically abstracted and atemporalized, the Indians turned spatialized, and this was the second characteristic of Parkman's history writing. The map below is the one which has been inserted at the beginning of the first chapter of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* since the first edition (Figure 10). As its title tells itself, this map is to locate "Forts and Settlements in America, A.D. 1763," such as Lancaster and Carlisle in Pennsylvania, and Albany and Schenectady in New York, and Fort Detroit, Fort Pitt and other military and commercial posts. A second look, however, confirms that it is also a habitat map of the Indian tribes, as the names of the Iroquois Nations run side by side toward the east, and the Ojibwas and the Ottawas between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. Historically decontextualized, the Indians are recognized as chiefly spatial beings, embedded dead static on the map.

Figure 10: The habitat map of the Indian tribes in *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*

Parkman's historical account itself also put major emphasis on spatiality, and herein lay the importance of travel for his history writing. To get quick to the point, his "history of American forest" was mostly a story of how the colonial people had traveled, settled and again migrated across the unreclaimed land, so it naturally featured their spatial migrations over the continent. Most typically, an imaginary "forest traveler" or "voyageur" appeared in the middle of a specific episode, or otherwise some historic figure would take a part of traveler, who led the narrative through the geographic expanse. While following the course of the traveler, the story on one occasion set forth from the fort and settlement of Detroit, crossed Lake St. Clair on canoe and row along a river upstream to Lake Huron, and "in the space of two or three weeks, if his Canadians labour well, and no accident occur," passed by the Islands of Bois Blanc and Mackinaw to end up in Fort Michillimackinac (*CP,* 582). In another passage, the traveler showed the way through the ancient battlefields and settlements in Pennsylvania: "the traveller would find himself, after a journey of fifty-six miles, at the little post of Ligonier, whence he would soon reach Fort Bedford, about a hundred miles from Fort Pitt…. Passing several small posts and settlements, he would arrive at Carlisle, nearly hundred miles farther east, a place resembling Bedford in its general aspect, although of greater extent" (*CP*, 622-23).

In the introductory chapter, too, Parkman's traveler ranged the Algonquin territory to locate their widely scattered abodes. "At the present day," he went on, "the traveller, perchance, may find them [the Algonquins] pitching their bark lodges along the beach at Mackinaw, spearing fish among the rapids of St. Mary's, or skimming the waves of Lake Superior in their birch canoes." (*CP*, 379), and "the prairie traveller may sometimes meet the Delaware warrior returning from a successful foray" (*CP*, 381). Ranging the wild woods or paddling a canoe across the Great Lakes, the voyager guided the reader to a ring of tribal settlements deep in the wild waste. The settings of the main narrative of Algonquin intrigues were thus laid out and impressed on the reader geographically. Spatiality was a constant undercurrent of Parkman's history writing. His history, in other words, consisted of a series of imaginary and actual travels over the American land. In this sense, travel proved to be a method for his history writing.

What kind of effect did the method of travel have on history writing then? The discussion thus far suggests that both ethnology and cartography molded Parkman's history in a theoretical abstraction detached out of the specific realities and laid out on an imaginary plane. The ethnological descriptions of the Indian tribes were the same as natural historical specimens, and the cartographic chart worked as a general reference grid, on which each specimen was tabulated and organized into the eternal order of being. The one important function of travel in Parkman's history was to reconfirm and reinforce this stable system, making sure that each unit was placed in its right place. Although the spatial migration was assigned to yet another crucial role in his writing (which will turn the main topic in the latter half of our discussion on Parkman), suffice it to say for the moment that most of his textual travel tended toward abstraction and spatial systematization.

IV. The Effects of a Traveler: Cartographic Abstraction and the Historic Tour

Travel or spatial cognition worked as a theoretical framework for Parkman's history writing. Most typically, the traveler's viewpoint soared up to a higher platform to encompass geographically dispersed places and events. Discrete historic associations were thus knitted together and totalized in a network form, just as in the manner that the Indian tribes were spatially arranged on a map in the first chapter of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*. According to Georges Van Den Abeele, travel always involves a detached point of reference "that organizes and domesticates a given area by defining all other points in relation to itself."[15] When it comes to Parkman's texts, the effect of a traveler's, as it were, panoramic perspective served "to totalize what is seen into an all-encompassing vision," to lay out history on a flat geographic expanse at one view.[16] The reader then got acquainted with history in its spatial deployment of different historical events rather than in the straightforward causation of linear temporality.[17]

15. Georges Van Den Abeele, *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992): xviii.

16. Van Den Abeele, *Travel as Metaphor*, 65.

17. Of course, spatiality is directly linked with visuality. As for the visual nature of Parkman's

Parkman's history writing was history mapping, in other words. His text was half devoted to literally charting the historic scenes onto a surface plane. To no surprise, mapmaking occupied so important a place in his project. He was an avid collector of historical maps,[18] but not satisfied with collecting alone, he even set out for mapmaking for

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history, there have been several excellent studies, including the above-mentioned essay on the relationship between Parkman's writings and picturesque aesthetic. See, for another first-rate example, Otis A. Pease, *Parkman's History: The Historian as Literary Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

18. Since the earliest days of his literary career, Parkman had wrote a number of letters to his fellow historians to ask for maps, charts, and plans of fortifications, which he thought would geographically corroborate his historical accounts (*Letters*, 1: lvii, 132). In the footnotes to his historical texts, Parkman scrupulously acknowledged each help form his fellow historians who provided maps and other important documents for him. Moreover, a huge amount of Parkman's correspondence, now in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, reveals that there was an active network of map enthusiasm between Parkman and his friends. See Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, especially Boxes 1-5.

His journals, too, were filled with references to the maps he consulted in his research; among others, his Paris notebooks in 1869 and 1872 were virtually a catalogue of the French manuscript maps of North America (*Journals*, 2: 523-36, 555-64). His passion for historical maps culminated in *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, where he made the most of the long-neglected resources of manuscript maps, such as those created by Jacques Marquette, Louis Joliet, Jean Baptiste Louis Franquelin and others, and even appended an eloquent exposition of "early unpublished maps of the Mississippi and the Great Lakes" to the text (*LS*, 1043-51).

Parkman's collection of manuscript maps was donated to Harvard University in two batches. On April 23, 1880, he wrote a letter to Justin Winsor who served as a university librarian at that time, and declared his intention to donate a part of his collection to the library of the alma mater.

> My Dear Sir,
>
> I beg to give to the Harvard College Library, a set of manuscript maps, including most of those described in the appendix of "La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West." They are marked with my name and numbered from 1 to 9.
>
> I reserve the right of taking them from the library for examination, should I have occasion at any time. (*Letters*, 2: 139)

himself.[19] His research trips included occasional geodetic surveys of historic sites. Take a look at an excerpt from his journal of 1878 when he visited his favorite haunts, Lake George and Ticonderoga:

> *Ticonderoga*. *Tuesday*. F[rench] lines are 800 or 1,000 yards from fort. 2 Redoubts near R.R. tunnel to protect heights in rear of F. left, which could easily be climbed at this point without exposure to cannons of fort. In front of the works, the land slopes away gently like an immense glacis; opposite the flanks, it is more broken…. Fort to Falls = 2 miles. Rapids, 1 mile long. Upper fall, head of rapids, to landing, 1 mile. Between landing & mountain of left side, 1/2 mile of rich meadow. (*Journals*, 2: 569)

Parkman put down many other similar geodetic observations in his travel log and, these land surveys produced a wealth of cartographic representations. On his trip to the Illinois River around Fort St. Louis, for example, he obtained assistance from local surveyors and made a couple of area maps projected onto the township diagram of the United States Public Land Survey System (*LS*, 935n; Figures 11 and 12). Throughout his research trips, he looked, heard, and touched the vestiges of the colonial past, which accounted for much of the descriptive details of his writings; but at the same time, it must be remembered, he traveled

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Later on, more other maps were bequeathed to Harvard University. According to Winsor's annual report of library collection, the University Library "received 89 maps in January, 1894, by the bequest of Francis Parkman." See Justin Winsor, "Seventeenth Report (1894) of Justin Winsor, Librarian of Harvard University" in Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (vol. 121, folder "Misc. Printed Materials"). Parkman's map collection is now in possession of Harvard Library Map Collection.

19. While working on *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, he wrote of his method of mapmaking in a letter to his friend, Charles Eliot Norton: "I have a draught made in the first place on a very large scale. Then I direct how to fill it in with the names of forts, Indian villages &c. all of which I have pretty clearly in my memory from the reading of countless journals, letters et. cet. and former travels over the whole ground. Then I examine the map, inch by inch, taking about half a minute for each examination, and also have it compared by competent eyes with ancient maps and draughts, then I have the big map reduced to a proper size" (*Letters*, 1: 77).

with a mapmaker's eye. A significant part of his historical research was framed in a cartographic perspective, or, in other words, a desire for the spatial and synchronic abstraction of the world.

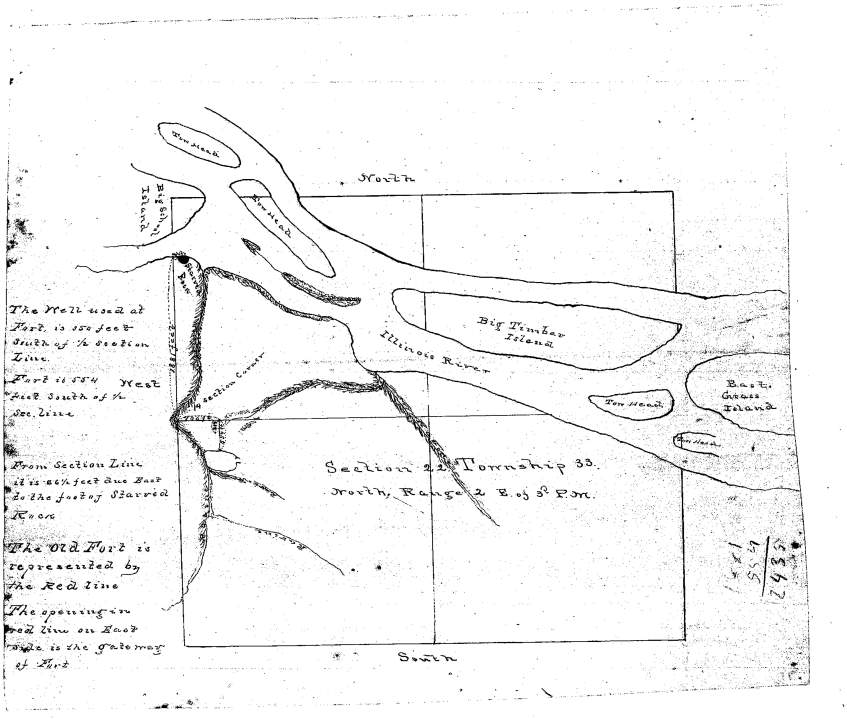

Figure 11: Parkman's map of Fort St. Louis and its environs (Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, vol. 121, folder "Misc. Mss., etc.")

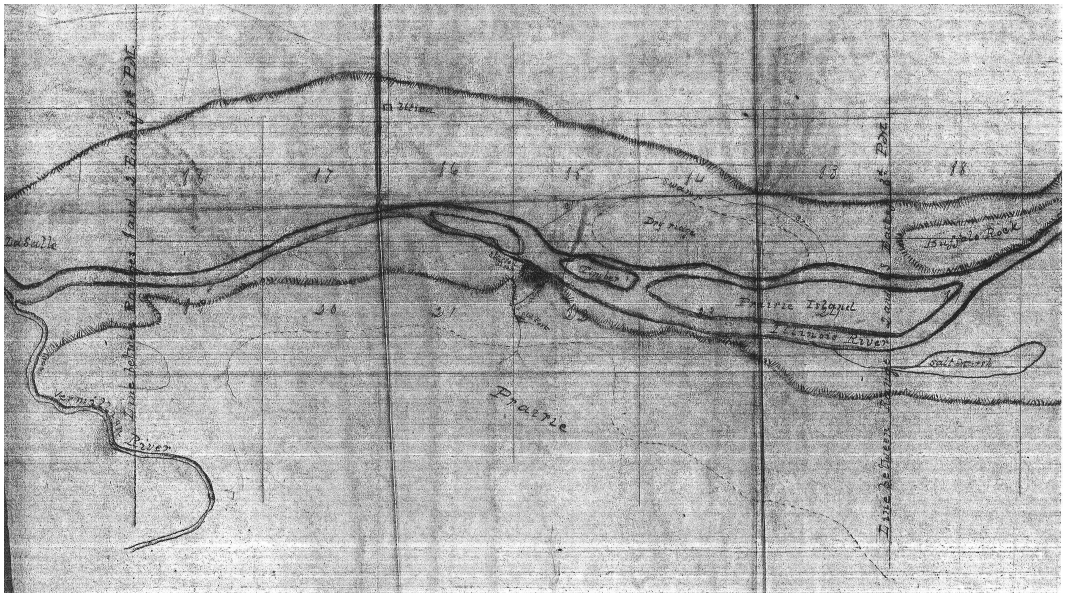

Figure 12: Parkman's map of the Illinois River, just below La Salle (Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, vol. 121, folder "Misc. Mss., etc."

Although a formal topographic survey was not his main business during the Oregon Trail trip, Parkman exercised his mapmaker's vision to overlook the Wild West in a grand sweeping panorama. He sometimes left the party on his way through the trail and ascended an occasional precipice for a broad view over the surrounding wilderness. "Something," he wrote, "impelled me to climb." Although his limbs had usually failed him due to overexertion,[20] he once in a while felt bodily strength and buoyancy well up, and a few hours of labor rewarded him with a sublime vision from the top: "emerging from the dark shadows of the rocks and pines, I stepped forth into the light, and walking along the sunny verge of a precipice, seated myself on its extreme point. Looking between the mountain peaks to the westward, the pale blue prairie was stretching to the farthest horizon like a serene and tranquil ocean" (*OT*, 237-38). He did not identify that seemingly subconscious impulse to climb, but he must have known what awaited him at the summit, as he had repeated the similar uphill explorations many times. He was driven by a strong urge for the panoramic comprehension of the land.

This panoramic experience certainly shaped the design of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*. The text comprised a series of verbal maps, each of which represented a panoramic view of the Western prairie from an elevation. The story often aimed "to survey the grand arena of the [colonial] strife," as if to overlook a wide spatial expanse. In his characteristically panoramic or bird's-eye manner, Parkman flung a far-reaching glance over "One vast, continuous forest [which] shadowed the fertile soil, covering the land as the grass covers a garden lawn, sweeping over hill and hollow in endless undulation, burying mountains in verdure, and mantling brooks and rivers from the light of day" (*CP*, 458-59). On this broad topographic map, historic sites were located one by one, and the courses of historic expeditions were

20. The severe weather and violent exercise on the Oregon Trail trip badly damaged his health and, a serious malady — what he called "the Enemy" — hadn't loosened its grip on his eyesight since then. As for Parkman's biography, see Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Francis Parkman, Historian as Hero: The Formative Years* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Otis A. Pease, *Parkman's History: The Historian as Literary Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953); Mason Wade, *Francis Parkman: Heroic Historian* (New York: Viking Press, 1942); and Charles Haight Farnham, *A Life of Francis Parkman* (1900; Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002).

tracked down as well.

The same procedure applied to Parkman's other writings. His historical narrative should be considered in its relationship with his geographic and cartographic researches. *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* should be paired with *The Oregon Trail*, and his other texts, too, were inseparable from his mapmaking and its underlying idea of spatial, panoramic totalization, which operated throughout his colonial history series. He first traveled the land, appreciated it geographically, and in the course of which, his history was conceived as a story of the grand continental expanse.

Of course, no traveler can keep the panoramic viewpoint all through the journey; one has to come down to the ground level time and again. Although panorama was the chief component of Parkman's history writing, I must hasten to add on, it was always tagged on to its corresponding close-up views. His textual travel provided minute details of each historic site, as well as the overall comprehension of the geographic expanse. It was a virtual historic tour, visiting one local attraction after another over the American Northwest. When the revised edition of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* was published in 1870, a reviewer compared its author to a tour guide, and hinted that reading Parkman's history was like an imaginary journey through historic sites: "This personal contact, as we may call it, with his theme, gives Mr. Parkman's book a high and almost unique value; and at every step we feel that we follow a guide who is not only perfectly familiar with the way, but has no disposition to romance any of its features."[21] This comment hit the right point. The chief commanding traveller in Parkman's books was the author himself, who climbed up to the panorama position on one occasion and guided his party/reader into the innermost views of the forest of American history on the other.

As a guide of historic tour, Parkman ushered the reader to a variety of historic associations buried in the land. Following the course of Baron Dieskau's raid on the British troop in the Battle of Lake George (1755), for example, he was scrupulous enough to refer to the "dark associations" of the site that the tourist/reader wouldn't afford to miss.

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21. "Recent Literature," *The Atlantic Monthly* 27 (April 1871): 522-23.

> This memorable conflict has cast its dark associations over one of the most beautiful spots in America. Near the scene of the evening fight, a pool, half overgrown by weeds and water lilies, and darkened by the surrounding forest, is pointed out to the tourist, and he is told that beneath its stagnant waters lie the bones of three hundred Frenchmen, deep buried in mud and slime. (*CP*, 440)

As he escorted the reader through his textual tour, Parkman illustrated how each place had its own historic associations, like those of memorable battles and sieges (see, for example, episodes associated with Fort du Quesne on the Ohio in *CP*, 622). Parkman's mission in history writing was to show the reader around the American land, and excavate and awaken the long-lost memories of place. The story of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* itself ended with conjuring up an episode of the great chief Pontiac associated with an Illinois town: "Neither mound nor tablet marked the burial-place of Pontiac. For a mausoleum, a city has risen above the forest hero; and the race whom he hated with such burning rancor trample with unceasing footsteps over his forgotten grave" (*CP*, 846). In the course of the virtual historic tour, the North American continent turned out to be a well storied land, fraught with various historic associations. The reader learned that there spread a historically rich soil under his or her feet. Geography and history were thus combined into one, or the American land was recontextualized with its own historic associations.

America had long been an unstoried land, or so the story went. Washington Irving, author of a number of travel sketches, once wrote in the persona of Geoffrey Crayon that American landscape would fully satisfy a lover of natural scenery because of its sublime beauty no other counties were blessed with, while Europe held forth what the American land lacked and needed most, that is, "all the charms of storied and poetical association."[22] This view must have been shared by other contemporary writers, and Parkman also made a similar remark in his autobiographical novel, *Vassall Morton* (1856): "A landscape will sometimes have a life and a language, — that is, when one happens to be in the mood to

22. Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, reprinted in Irving, *History, Tales and Sketches* (New York: Library of America, 1983): 743-44.

hear it, — and yet, after all, association is commonly the major source of its power. Thus Hudson, I imagine, can match the Rhine in point of mere beauty; but a few ruined castles, with the memories about them, turn the tables dead against us."[23] Parkman's history writing was to turn the tables once again. His texts testified that the New World did have fertile sources of associations for itself, and all through his literary career, he constantly recurred to such narratives of place. A year after the publication of his penultimate piece, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884), he extracted from his own books the proper passages related with historic sites and put them together to compile a guidebook of the North American historic tour, *Historic Handbook of the Northern Tour: Lakes George and Champlain, Niagara, Montreal, Quebec* (1885). The book was, he declared in its preamble, "a group of narratives of the most striking events of our colonial history connected with the principal points of interest to the tourist visiting Canada and the northern borders of the United States."[24] Considering the importance of travel and historic associations in his writings, this guidebook was not a minor spin-off but rather an epitome of his entire project.[25] The existence of the traveler figure styled his historical account into a virtual historic tour, and rich associations proved embedded in the American land.

Parkman's history thus resorted to the double perspective, panoramic abstraction and close-up particularity. Throughout his textual tour of American history, he occasionally presented a broad historical scene from a panoramic point of view, and then he also zoomed in on particular details of local historic associations, only to zoom out again to a sweeping map-like vision from a higher platform. While ethnological and cartographic abstraction decontextualized colonial North America, his textual tour operated to recontextualize it with memories of place. The process of recontextualization alternated with the abstract

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23. Francis Parkman, *Vassall Morton: A Novel* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1856): 113.

24. Francis Parkman, *Historic Handbook of the Northern Tour: Lakes George and Champlain, Niagara, Montreal, Quebec* (1885; Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1899): vii.

25. As for the problem of historic association, I am indebted to Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (1995; New York: Vintage Books, 1996); Larzer Ziff, *Return Passage: Great American Travel Writing 1780-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

description of decontextualization, and the effects of a traveler corresponded with this stylistic reciprocation. Ultimately, the bifocal viewpoint brought his writing into another level of temporalization. His "history of American forest" was both the embodiment of detached abstraction and the renewed attempt at historical narrative.

Parkman's literary knack lay in the shuttling back and forth between the two viewpoints. In the next two chapters, our discussions will center on the mechanism of zoom-in and zoom-out representation in his historical texts.

V. Space of History

Charles Olson, although far from specific, had it right about the spatial nature of Parkman's history writing.

> I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom cave to now. I spell it large because it comes large here. Large, and without mercy.
>
> It is geography at bottom, a hell of wide land from the beginning. That made the first American story (Parkman's): exploration.[26]

After *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, too, Parkman's history writing revolved around the American land. He had never deviated from his original plan of "the history of American forest." Right up to *A Half-Century of Conflict* (1892), the final installment of his North American colonial history, the traveler remained the main pilot to steer the narrative forward. As the traveler's point of view worked as a unifying principle of the historical account, his alternate vision of zoom-in and zoom-out was crucial in shaping its narrative style. And following the course of the textual expeditions, the reader learned about the historic associations of each locality, and at the same time realized the American geographic expanse to be "the central fact" of the national history.

Parkman's historical writings in general could be categorized under the genre of "the literature of place," a set of textual, as well as graphic, endeavors to describe the American

26. Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael* (1947; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 11.

terrain, which had been published consistently since the revolutionary era through the nineteenth century. According to Pamela Regis, the literature of place was a generic name for nonfiction prose writings that sought to define the new political entity of America by observing, listing, and describing its unique natural features and objects. It was sort of a natural historical declaration of independence. The overall style was a combination of natural history's descriptiveness and travel writing's narrativity, and most typically, it was a story of a white male traveler exploring and systematizing the American land with a methodical classification of natural historical findings. Representative of this genre were the texts of William Bartram and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur, and significantly enough, it later on branched out to nineteenth-century ethnology.[27]

The first chapter of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* consisted of natural historical and ethnological representations of the Indian tribes, and the ensuing story itself was unfolded by the traveler-figure's spatial migration, in the course of which history grew spatialized over the vast geographic expanse. Nobody doubt that *The Oregon Trail* was a typical text of the literature of place, but Parkman's history writing also shared a lot with the genre, or, one would rather say, it was a direct heir to the revolutionary and early national writings on the American physical realities.

Set in a wider social context, this geographic nature of Parkman's history had much to do with the contemporary interest in the territorial acquisition. His panoramic vision of the American land was nothing but a gesture of the magisterial authority over the continental expanse, and his close-up stories of local historic associations, too, mishandled the past of the indigenous inhabitants. Once the Indian tribes were spatially configured on his historical map, their role was solely to give stories to the land. Let us take note of the exploitative connotations of the very last line of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac.* Parkman uncovered the long-forgotten burial-place of the great chief Pontiac in a gesture of commemoration, but it was

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27. See Pamela Regis, *Describing Early America: Bartram, Jefferson, Crevecoeur, and the Influence of Natural History* (1992; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999): 2-39 for the general overview of the literature of place, and 135-57 for the genre's contribution to nineteenth-century ethnology.

only to provide the past for the white man's city that stood over it. The traces of the conquered remained on the map of the conqueror, but only to be co-opted into the latter's national history. Although the Indians were an integral part of his narrative, Parkman reckoned their historical value solely as a foil to the triumph and progress of white America. He at once remembered and forgot, or wrote and unwrote the Indian.[28]

Granted that Parkman was of a typical white imperialist stamp, however, his view, or to be exact, his bifocal view over American geography and history deserves our further examination in terms of historiographical methodology. His was a vision of dual optics, which freely shuttled back and forth between panoramic abstraction and down-to-earth particularity. This double perspective, I believe, was a clue to the makeup of his historicity. In the next chapter, then, I will look closely into the workings of the two apparently incompatible points of view, both of which operated together to introduce an immensely long and slow sense of temporality to his historical writings.

28. José Rabasa's discussion on European imperialism in Mesoamerica is highly intriguing in this connection, especially when he identifies the process of territorialization with the "spatialization of native history and the infusion of a new historical temporality," comparing its eventual outcome as a palimpsest complex of history and geography. See Rabasa, *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

Chapter Seven

American Dual Optics: Panorama, Parataxis and the Slowness of History

I. Dual Optics

The travel across the geographic stretch was a definitive factor of Francis Parkman's history for good reason. His narrative was about discovery and exploration in the New World, so geographic concerns predominated in it at any moment. Even when he ostensibly elaborated on the conflict between the two colonial rivals, his focus was on the geographic aspects of the warfare, because "in America, war assumed a new and striking aspect. A wilderness was its sublime arena…. And before the hostile powers could join in battle, endless forests must be traversed, and morasses passed, and everywhere the axe of the pioneer must hew a path for the bayonet of the soldier" (*CP*, 429). Toward the grand finale of *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884), he made the same point again, and this time even more clearly.

> "Geography," says Von Moltke, "is three fourths of military science;" and never was the truth of his words more fully exemplified. Canada was fortified with vast outworks of defence in the savage forests, marshes, and mountains that encompassed her, where the thoroughfares were streams choked with fallen trees and obstructed by cataracts. Never was the problem of moving troops, encumbered with baggage and artillery, a more difficult one. The question was less how to fight the enemy than how to get at him. (*MW*, 1456)

The American colonial warfare had been primarily geographic, and so was its history — a story of bush ranging and wandering over the wilderness, and of "less how to fight the enemy than how to get at him." The focus was always on space, place, and landscape.[1]

1. As I showed in Chapter 5, Parkman was not the only one who stressed the geographic dimension in historiography. His mentor, Jared Sparks, also was an earnest traveler and had a strong interest in early colonial explorers, and other contemporary historians equally admitted that it was a essential part of their task to visit the historic sites for themselves. Parkman's history was one of the

As an ablest guide well versed both in history and geography, Parkman retraced such historical expeditions on his books, and in so doing, escorted the reader to historic sites en route, providing alternately close-up episodes of specific places and an all-encompassing view from the top. While roaming through the dense protracted thicket of descriptive details, he climbed up every so often to a higher platform, which commanded a broad tableau of historical scenes at one view. His history ranged back and forth between paratactic detailedness and panoramic generalization. Reading such a text is to put to work the double perspective of close-up and bird's-eye views, either of which is indispensable to the full understanding of his history.

Panorama and parataxis equally informed Parkman's literary style. Critics agree on what best characterized his history of the North American colonial struggle: the descriptive vividness of minute details in each episode of early adventurers and settlers on the one hand, and the panoramic representation of the vast geographic expanse on the other. Usually, these two features have been discussed separately,[2] but they in fact derived from the same authorial design which highlighted the spatial and simultaneous arrangement of historical accounts. Parkman's paratactic thoroughness and panoramic abstraction both conspired to transform or, to be exact, spatialize the chronological linearity of historical

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culminating points in the tradition of "American geographico-history."

2. Of Parkman's literary style, both contemporary reviewers and modern critics point out the real-life vividness of Parkman's descriptions. See, for example, "Parkman's *History of Pontiac's War*," *The North American Review* 73 (October 1851): 495-529; William Dean Howells, "Mr. Parkman's Histories," *The Atlantic Monthly* 34 (November 1874): 602-10; "Mr. Parkman's Montcalm and Wolfe," *The Atlantic Monthly* 55 (February 1885): 265-70; James Russell Lowell, "Francis Parkman," *The Century Magazine: A Popular Quarterly* 45 (November 1892): 44-45; John Fisk, "Introductory Essay" for *The Works of Francis Parkman*, vol. 1 (1897; Boston, Little, Brown, and Company, 1910): xi-xli; and Richard C. Vitzthum, *The American Compromise: Theme and Method in the Histories of Bancroft, Parkman, and Adams* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974). The best discussion on Parkman's panoramic representation is Otis A. Pease's *Parkman's History: The Historian as Literary Artist*. Howard Doughty labels Parkman's descriptive vividness as that of the "kinesthetic" composition. See Doughty, *Francis Parkman* (1962; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983): 97-98, 156, 165, 187 and 245 specifically.

narrative into a concurrent juxtaposition of different events. Spatial imagination definitely governed his history writing of macro- and micro-scopic viewpoints.

In this chapter, I examine how the dual optics of panorama and parataxis worked in Parkman's texts, and reconsider the effects of the geographic orientation on his history writing. All in all, the combination of paratactic and panoramic styles disrupted the simple linearity of historical narrative, but it instead installed a notion of slow or almost inert history, where historical sequence was flattened out in spatial juxtaposition. This flat narrative structure, when embedded in "the history of American forest," brought forth a singular concept of historicity, which might be termed the nature's temporality of slow and infinitesimal changes. The same double perspective, moreover, registered the particular circumstances of American physical reality, too. It accommodated the two different ways to manage the continental landmass at once: identifying with each patch of the local soil and grasping the vast geographic expanse at one sweep. It was the American point of view, which, bred out of American geographic conditions, had long been featured in a number of literary texts since the colonial era. The following discussion illustrates how Parkman's history incorporated the native dual optics into itself and, in the course of switching back and forth between zoom-in and zoom-out views, proposed the long and slow idea of history and reenacted America's way of seeing its own land as well.

II. Panoramic History

Considering an appropriate label for Parkman's history, one might come up with the name "panoramic history." His texts were regularly punctuated with panoramic depictions of historical scenes. Here are a couple of examples. The first one, from *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West* (1869; enlarged and revised in 1879), portrayed a grand scenery of the Illinois basin as seen by La Salle standing on the ramparts of his Fort St. Louis. From this outpost built on a natural elevation "high and inaccessible as an eagle's nest," the broad scenery "spread beneath him like a map"; in its panoramic tableau, the Illinois river "flowed calmly westward through the vast meadows, till its glimmering blue ribbon was lost in hazy distance," and the historic associations of the fair basin which had once been "a waste of

death and desolation, scathed with fire, and strewn with the ghastly relics" of an Iroquois warfare were juxtaposed with the contemporary scenes of "a concourse of wild human life" (*LS*, 934). Human affairs both in the past and present were thus set as a part of the extensive natural scenery.

The similar panoramic moment came also in the penultimate piece, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, in which Parkman represented a far-reaching scene of the Northeast and Canadian battle fields, characteristically as a view from birds of passage.

> Spring came at last, and the Dutch burghers of Albany heard, faint from the far height, the clamor of the wild-fowl, streaming in long files northward to their summer home. As the aerial travellers winged their way, the seat of war lay spread beneath them like a map. First the blue Hudson, slumbering among its forests, with the forts along its banks, Half-Moon, Stillwater, Saratoga, and the geometric lines and earthen mounds of Fort Edward. Then a broad belt of dingy evergreen; and beyond, released from wintry fetters, the glistening breast of Lake George, with Fort William Henry at its side, amid charred ruins and a desolation of prostrate forests. (*MW*, 1152)

Parkman's vision periodically soared up to an imaginary higher platform, from which he overlooked the course of history as a panoramic expanse. In the moment of all-encompassing abstraction, historic sites were, again, deployed flatly "like a map" and wide open at one view. The magnificent scenery of the Hudson, Lake George and the broad forests embraced North American colonial history in its bosom. The cartographic configuration of the Indian tribes which we discussed in Chapter Six was a variation of the same panoramic abstraction of history. The panoramic perspective was the one essential element that shaped the design of his history writing.

The significance of the sweeping vision in Parkman's history is what we are going to elaborate on, but let us first note that the passion for panorama was not exclusive to his writings. On the contrary, it was (and, I suspect, is) one of the built-in features of American

personality, and it had constituted a primary requisite of being or becoming an American since the early national era. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) attested to the cultural potency of the American panoramic point of view. In his third and most famous letter, Crèvecœur posited quite a fundamental question, "What is an American?" Imagining a traveler from Europe and his amazement at the immensity of the American land, he pointed out that "the difficulty consist in the manner of viewing so extensive a scene."[3] The first task for the newcomer was to get accustomed to its vastness, gain the ability of comprehending the vast scenery at one view, and "alter his scale" of vision both physically and mentally.

> An European, when he first arrives, seems limited in his intentions, as well as in his views; but he very suddenly alters his scale; two hundred miles formerly appeared a very great distance, it is now but a trifle; he no sooner breathes our air than he forms schemes, and embarks in designs he never would have thought of in his own country. There the plenitude of society confines many useful ideas, and often extinguishes the most laudable schemes which here ripen into maturity. Thus Europeans become Americans.[4]

To be an American, in other words, one had to have finished the special visual training to broaden the outlook and manage the vastness of the land. Otherwise, one wouldn't be an American, but a narrow-scoped alien who only happened to be in America.

Panoramic imagination was featured in other literary texts, too, and it permeated through a broad range of American culture well into the nineteenth century. At the beginning of Joel Barlow's *The Columbiad* (1807), for example, the spirit of Christopher Columbus, summoned up by the New World's guardian angel, Hesper, "gain'd the height,/ New Strength and brilliance flush'd his mortal sight;/When calm before them flow'd the

3. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): 40.

4. Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 57.

western main,/Far stretch'd immense, a sky-encircled plain," and from this elevated position, a series of panoramic visions of American history were shown unrolled down there until the very end of the epic poem.[5] The same panoramic vision was a signature style of American landscape painters, most notably those of the Hudson River and Luminist Schools. Their paintings made the most of panoramic representation to grasp the vast expanse of American scenery at one view. Moreover, the panorama itself — a British-born visual device of 360° painted canvas installed in a rotunda, or sometimes a longer roll unwound across the theater stage from one spool to another — had a strong affinity with American landscape paintings. It enjoyed popular acclaim in nineteenth-century America, when Joel Barlow introduced it to his people (No wonder his poetic expression was that panoramic). As Barbara Novak points out, "The panoramas open up a number of speculations on the American artist's solutions to certain spatial problems," a method to manage the vast expanse of the continent.[6] This painterly mode was almost native to American culture, and as the frontier spread westward, more and more panoramas followed, which, in turn, helped impress the public with the vastness of the continent. As one critic mentions, "the panorama became the age's image *par excellence*."[7]

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5. Joel Barlow, *The Columbiad, a Poem* (1807; London: Printed for Richard Phillips, Bridge Street, Blackfriars, 1809): ll. 197-200. The title of the original version was *The Vision of Columbus: A Poem in Nine Books*, published in 1787. Barlow revised and enlarged it into *The Columbiad*. In this poem, Barlow deliberately set up Columbus as the father of the North American colony, or the original American.

6. Barbara Novak, *American Paintings of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism and the American Experience* (1980; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007): 92.

7. Henry M. Sayre, "Surveying the Vast Profound: The Panoramic Landscape in American Consciousness," *Massachusetts Review* 24 (1983): 726. For further details concerning the panorama device and its impact on contemporary American society, see Allan Wallach, "Making a Picture of the View from Mount Holyoke" in David C. Miller, ed., *American Iconology: New Approaches to Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 80-91; Angela Miller, "Space as Destiny: The Panorama Vogue in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America" in Irving Lavin, ed., *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989): 739-44; and James T. Callow, *Kindred Spirits: Knickerbocker Writers and American Artists, 1807-1855* (Chapel Hill:

One effect of the panoramic vision was to facilitate the nineteenth-century expansionist discourse. After all, the view from above was the view of the "Imperial Eye" or "Magisterial Gaze," panoramically/panoptically comprehending the vast continental expanse into its own scope. The imperial eye worked as an apparently innocent and nonchalant viewpoint, as the territorial expansion in the Enlightenment era, Mary Louise Pratt explains, was made possible not through the aggressive usurpation but the seemingly passive soft power.[8] Many critics has pointed out the expansionist disposition of Parkman, who could remain surprisingly innocent and detached all through his travel on the Oregon trail, even if his trip was done in 1846, "the year of decision" for the western expansion.[9] The nineteenth-century American landscape paintings, too, were another agent of sleek requisition of the expansive

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University of North Carolina Press, 1967): 145-50.

According to Marjorie Hope Nicolson, the idea of infinitude and vastness shifted its place in the minds of late eighteenth-century western people. Traditionally, the idea of vastness had had a negative connotation, in contrast to the beauty of regularity, proportion, and restrained mannerism. As the eighteenth century went on with the field of action and knowledge expanding dramatically, however, people learned to put more value on something expansive and infinite; hence was the new "aesthetic of the infinite" born, and the conception of infinitude and vastness was fully developed in the vast American continent. The panoramic viewpoint, as a way to manage the vastness, became a uniquely American viewpoint. See Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (1959; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), especially 1-33, 113-43.

8. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992; New York: Routledge, 2008): 67-83.

9. Most critics have referred to the relationship between Parkman's histories and the expansionist discourse. See, for example, Richard C. Vitzthum, *The American Compromise: Theme and Method in the Histories of Bancroft, Parkman, and Adams* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974); Stephen P. Knadler, "Francis Parkman's Ethnography of the Brahmin Caste and *The History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac*," *American Literature* 65.2 (June 1993): 215-38; Francis Jennings, "Francis Parkman: A Brahmin among Untouchables," *William and Mary Quarterly* 42.3 (July 1985): 305-28; L. Hugo Moore, "Francis Parkman on the Oregon Trail: A Study in Cultural Prejudice," *Western American Literature* 12.3 (1977): 185-97.

land, "the desire to carve out unity, harmony, and order from endless vistas."[10] The panoramic viewpoint reduced minor (yet, of course, significant) differences into the smoothly unified whole, the unity of the empire.

The other panoramic effect, which is more important to the present thesis, was its power of reduction or abstraction itself. The dominant feature of Parkman's panoramic representation was its descriptive sereneness and peacefulness. Both panoramic passages cited above from *La Salle* and *Montcalm and Wolfe* look so tranquil and uneventful for a historical narrative. Even when they describe "a concourse of wild human life" and "the seat of war," the activities are reduced into a strangely peaceful scenery viewed from the top, in which the Illinois river flows "calmly westward through the vast meadows, till its glimmering blue ribbon was lost in hazy distance," or "First the blue Hudson, slumbering among its forests…. Then a broad belt of dingy evergreen; and beyond, released from wintry fetters, the glistening breast of Lake George." Here is one last example of panoramic abstraction and tranquility, this time from *Pioneers of France in the New World* (1865). After the historic associations of the mountain, "*Mont Royal*, Montreal," are duly presented as a part of local history of the city, the scene moves on to a view from the renowned hill.

> From the summit, that noble prospect met his [Jacques Cartier's] eye which at this day is the delight of tourists, but strangely changed, since, first of white men, the Breton voyager gazed upon it. Tower and dome and spire, congregated roofs, white sail, and gliding steamer, animate its vast expanse with varied life. Cartier saw a different scene. East, west, and south, the mantling forest was over all, and the broad blue ribbon of the great river glistened amid a realm of verdure. Beyond, to the bounds of Mexico, stretched a leafy desert, and the vast hive of industry, the mighty

10. Albert Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting c. 1830-1865* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991): 35. As for the implications of the nineteenth-century American landscape paintings with the expansionist discourse, see also Henry M. Sayre, "Surveying the Vast Profound: The Panoramic Landscape in American Consciousness" *Massachusetts Review* 24 (1983): 723-42; and Wallach, "Making a Picture of the View from Mount Holyoke."

> battle-ground of later centuries, lay sunk in savage torpor, wrapped in illimitable woods. (*PF*, 162)

Through the pages leading up to this passage, Parkman recounted in lively detail Cartier's westward expedition to seek out a passage to India, from the departure ceremony and various geographic findings to the ethnographic descriptions of an Indian village (*PF*, 155-62). And then came an almost sublimated moment of panoramic vision, where, again, motionlessness and uneventfulness pervaded.[11] In the broad scene of hypnotic inactivity, every prospect of historical dynamism "lay sunk in savage torpor, wrapped in illimitable woods." Parkman's panoramic representation drowned human actions in a serene and abstract tableau of natural scenery, and created an atmosphere of neutrality or inertia.

Panorama and its entailing abstraction prevailed in Parkman's history writing, but this is only a half of the story. While he zoomed out to an abstract view of historical scenes, his zoom-in detailedness stressed on the factuality and substantiality of discrete individual episodes. Panoramic vision was always set in combination with the inner views of minute particularities. This was the case with what I previously referred to as the American panoramic point of view in general. In his definition of the American character, Crèvecœur neatly coupled its all-embracing abstract perspective with the simultaneous persistence in down-to-earth solid particularities. His short piece, "History of Andrew, the Hebridean," fully dramatized the realization of the American identity of an immigrant farmer through the practical interaction with the American soil, and the episode significantly ended up with a meticulous list of Andrew's total assets after the four years of hard work in America. So niggling as it might look, the chart epitomized his New World personality.[12] Panorama was

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11. Howard Doughty also points out the "secular inertia" of Parkman's panoramic representations. See Doughty, *Francis Parkman,* 238-89, 278-79.

12. "History of Andrew, the Hebridean" is an appendix to Letter III of *Letters from an American Farmer.* Andrew's asset chart bears an interesting resemblance to Thoreau's balance sheet inserted in his record of the experimental life on the Walden pond. The American dual optics of panoramic abstraction and close-up details can be detected in nineteenth-century Transcendentalist thought. I will discuss Emerson's instantaneous switch between universalism and individualism in the

definitely the American vision of itself, but at the same time, minute details, close-up views, or any variation of "the cult of facts" equally mattered to fulfill the American selfhood.

Parkman's history writing reenacted the same dual optics in its free and instantaneous changeover between zoom-in and zoom-out. Since their original publications, his books have been recognized as distinctly "the most deeply and peculiarly American" of all American historians.[13] His so-called "American voice," however, referred not just to the theme and subject of his history, nor to his firsthand experience of the North American wilderness.[14] If his history symbolized something particularly American, it was rather because of its alternate switch in viewpoint between panorama and detail, which was an expression of one of the essentially American experiences that had shaped the national character since the colonial period onward.

At the level of textual analysis, too, Parkman's panoramic passages should be appreciated as a pair to the close-up and paratactic descriptions of American history, to which we move on in the next section.

III. Parataxis

Throughout *Democracy in America* (1835-40), Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out the American dual optics of panoramic abstraction and individual particularities. Admittedly, America was a country of individualism with its pragmatic interest in practical businesses. But, seen from a different angle, America was also a country of general ideas and abstraction, stressing uniformity over individuality. In the country where social equality realized itself, according to Tocqueville, individualism easily turned into the absolute dependence upon the whole, because the prevalence of social uniformity made sure that each individual's idea was the same as the other's and ultimately identified with public

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concluding chapter of this thesis.

13. John Fisk, "Introductory Essay" for *The Works of Francis Parkman*, vol. 1 (1897; Boston, Little, Brown, and Company, 1910): lxxxv.

14. See Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties: Unwarranted Speculations* (1991; New York: Vintage Books, 1992): 49.

opinion. The people then could value the idea of general uniformity *and* that of discrete particularity at once. They had two extremes at the same time, the most solid and the most abstract. "In democratic societies, each citizen is usually preoccupied with something quite insignificant: himself. If he lifts up his eyes, he sees only one immense image, that of society, or the even larger figure of the human race. He has either very particular and very clear ideas or very general and very vague notions; there is nothing in between."[15]

Parkman's history was an example of the American bifocal vision, and his viewpoint alternately soared up to panoramic abstraction and dove down to hyper-local particularities, with nothing in between. In contrast with panorama, his close-up descriptions of historical details were cases of parataxis, placing one episode after another with no apparent causal relation between them. The story was almost clogged with a plethora of facts and details, just as were the earlier generations of documentary history.

Parkman's paratactic narrative was a good example of what Erich Auerbach would term the "retarding" text, swaying back and forth between sundry episodes of history.[16] When he recounted an expedition of the French colonial troops, for instance, he never failed to mention their ceremonies of nailing the fleur-de-lis plates along the way, and even went on to sketch how one plate was discovered later by "a party of boys, bathing in the river," who "melted half of it into bullets," and how what remained changed hands and came finally under the care of the American Antiquarian Society (*MW*, 877-78). Although the military march resumed soon in the next paragraph — "The weather was by turns rainy and hot; and the men, tired and famished, were fast falling ill" (*MW*, 878) —, the story was obviously interrupted by the sudden shift of focus.

Besides the main storyline, Parkman's history was packed with minor episodes, each of which to him well deserved a passing remark, and this not in the footnote but right in the midst of the body text. His typical depiction of an Indian raid, for another example,

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15. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835-40; New York: The Library of America, 2004): 561.

16. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1953; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003): 5-7.

diligently picked up such obscure people and events, however insignificant and digressive they might seem:

> Thirty Indians attacked the village of Hampton, killed the widow Mussey, a famous Quakeress…. At Black Point nineteen men going to their work in the meadows were ambushed by two hundred Indians…. At York the wife and children of Arthur Brandon were killed, and the Widow Parsons and her daughter carried off. At Berwick the Indians attacked the fortified house of Andrew Neal…. Early in February a small party of them hovered about the fortified house of Joseph Bradley at Heverhill…. (*HC*, 368)

Although "That pompous spectre which calls itself the Dignity of History would scorn to take note of them [minor details]," he maintained, "yet they are highly instructive" so as to exhibit the inner workings of history "all the more vividly for the narrowness of the field" (*HC*, 416). The attention to small incidents rendered his story highly denotative and, as he insisted himself, the descriptions were so factual and solid. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that descriptive vividness established itself at the cost of narrative flow, which was frequently congested and retarded by paratactic deviations in Parkman's narrative.

Parkman's parataxis often implemented the mixture of different time-frames. In one instance, his story featured the battle over the Detroit region between the French and the Outagamies in the early eighteenth century, but as it turned out, Parkman eventually swerved to another Outagamie rising one hundred years later in 1832 and then to the painter Charles Bodmer, who painted a group of the tribe a year after the second insurgence. Never forgetting to give several lines of commentaries on the painting, he then further leapt "three or four years" forward, and appended his own eyewitness testimony of the Outagamie warriors: "a party of their chiefs and warriors was conducted through the country by order of the Washington government, in order to impress them with the number and power of the whites. At Boston they danced a war-dance on the Common in full costume, to the delight of the boy spectators, of whom I was one" (*HC*, 564). It is as if

Parkman couldn't help squeezing a few words about whatever one story reminded him of, no matter how widely those side episodes were separated from the original time sequence. When he followed the course of the British expedition to capture Fort Louisbourg, Nova Scotia in 1745, he touched upon the landing of soldiers and armaments on the same marsh as General Amherst did in 1758, and he could not but attend the Amherst's campaign for a while, even if it was yet to come only "Thirteen years after" (*HC,* 646). Parkman's paratactic history juxtaposed one period with the other into a bricolage of different temporalities. And as the pattern reiterated itself, the narrative linearity of "Before-and-After" was transformed into the strange simultaneity of "Alongside," in which temporally separate episodes were foregrounded all together.[17]

The same paratactic sidestepping affected the tense management in Parkman's history; it mixed different tenses together and thereby stemmed the linear flow of the narrative. In his portrayal of William Pepperrell, a Massachusetts merchant, who led the 1745 siege of Fort Louisbourg, Parkman deliberately conflated the historical course of events with the voice of the present: "I write these lines at a window of this curious old house [of Pepperrell's], and before me spreads the scene familiar to Pepperrell from childhood" (*HC,* 625). What followed then was the descriptions of the landscape which Parkman beheld at this moment and Pepperrell might have seen in his days — "Here the river Piscataqua widens to join the sea, holding in its gaping mouth the large island of Newcastle, with attendant groups of islets and island rocks, battered with the rack of ages, studded with dwarf savins…" (*HC,* 625). All set in the present tense, the passage would invite the reader to a sort of a guided tour, which effectively relaxed and curbed the narrative impetus right in the middle of the eventful chapter titled "A Mad Scheme." And several lines down, the reader would soon find themselves rerailed back to the main track of history, as the story reverted to the past

17. In the analysis of Parkman's paratactic writing, I am indebted to Auerbach's study of *The Odyssey*, and Franco Moretti's reconsideration of modernist texts, or what he calls "modern epics." The terms "Before-and-After" and "Alongside" are Moretti's. See Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to Garcia Márquez* (London: Verso, 1996): 41-52. As for Parkman's methodological anachronism in describing the Indian tribes, see also the discussions in the last chapter.

tense without any apparent sign. Oscillating back and forth between different temporalities, the story was thrown into a process of paratactic or metonymic displacement, only loosely linked in a causal chain. Its paratactical structure was, to use Franco Moretti's words, "the smashing of linear time," branching out the narrative development over various directions and slowing down the pressing flow of time.[18]

Of course, Parkman's history primarily featured stories of colonial heroes, and its overall framework of the narrative was pointing toward the grand denouement of the French and Indian War. As we have seen so far, however, the frequent digressions into minor details and different temporalities continually checked the steady progress of his historical narrative. His paratactic style makes us almost miss its principal plot, even though (or perhaps because) each episode independently feels so vivid and close-by, as if it were transpiring right in front of us. What matters here is, in a sense, a clash of narrative coherency and information overload, which haunts not just Parkman's history, but other contemporary historians' writings as well. "If the function of the historical discourse is to communicate relevant, coherent (but not over-schematized) information about the past," Ann Rigney states, "numerous statements by historians attest to the fact that rendering the 'manifest confusion' of events comprehensible is easier said in normative statements than done in practice."[19] Parkman's narrative could not be wrapped up in one neat package. Despite its series title, *France and England in North America,* his colonial history was not just about the military actions between the two rival countries in the New World, but its topics also ranged from the frontier lives of the early settlers and the Jesuit missions to the customs and manners of the Indian tribes. In this encyclopedic repertoire, Parkman often disregarded a linear causal chain, but laid open all the individual episodes — minor stories as well as major ones, contemporary or non-contemporary — side by side on the flat surface.

History is to make a short story long. It is a writing that inflates a short duration of time with an ever-increasing amount of particular details. Generations of historians have

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18. Moretti, *Modern Epic*, 51.

19. Ann Rigney, "Relevance, Revision and the Fear of Long Books," in Frank Ankersmit and Hans Kellner, eds., *A New Philosophy of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995}: 133

resurrected one new fact after another and continued to amplify each historical account with new sources and details. History books naturally grow thicker and longer, and the effect of their inflationary nature presents itself in two ways. For one thing, the variety and volume of documentary evidence certainly contributes to the verisimilitude of historical accounts; for another, the infinite plenitude of source materials holds every attempt at historical comprehension incomplete. "This paradoxical state of being overextended and yet unfinished would seem to be endemic to representations of the past."[20] Or to put it the other way, history never ceases to expand, precisely because imperfection is intrinsic to any project of historical representation.

As a historian in the age of the dominance of Rankean archival researches, Francis Parkman was yet another long writer, with a heaping pile of documentary sources — letters, journals, reports, autographs, newspapers, pamphlets, maps and other sundry papers both in manuscript and print — at hand. And his history knew no definite sense of completion. The series of *France and England in North America* numbered eight titles (fifteen separate volumes) in total, and he did revise and enlarge half of them as new pieces of evidence came up after publication. What would he have thought when he issued the revised edition of *The Old Régime in Canada* only several months before his death in 1893? Another possible revision or two yet to be made, most likely.

Paratactic detailedness entailed exhaustiveness and digressiveness in Parkman's history, and this sort of narrative prolixity or congestion was of major consequence to the notion of temporality that controlled his whole writings. His story did not follow a straight line rushing through major events, but lingered over apparently insignificant episodes once in a while and stopped to examine particular details, which were paratactically unfolded and foregrounded side by side, often regardless of temporal causality. The dominant tenor was that of slowness and minuteness. His colonial history series indeed was cut short and retitled into *The Battle for North America*, a single-volume abridgment by John Tebbel in 1948. Only when keeping pace with the original long books, however, could we understand what

20. Ann Rigney, *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001): 60.

Parkman really achieved through his "extremely slow and laborious" process of writing: as the authorities were "even more minutely examined, more scrupulously collated, and more thoroughly digested, than they would have been under ordinary circumstances," his books grew long, encyclopedic, and unending (*CP*, 349).[21] And the resultant conception of history turned that of slow and minute historical changes as well.

IV. The Slowness of History

Parkman's history frequently shuttled back and forth between panoramic abstraction and paratactic detailedness. He himself referred to the alternate switch in perspective between "near and remote" in his "Introduction" to *Pioneers of France*.

> Faithfulness to the truth of history involves far more than a research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and yet the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue. The narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the time. He must study events in their bearings near and remote; in the character, habits, and manners of those who took part in them, he must himself be, as it were, a sharer or a spectator of the action he describes. (*PF*, 16)

A historian, according to Parkman's instructions, had to know historical facts in "the most minute exactness" and at the same time oversee the general course of the narrative "as a whole." He should be an intimate participant and a detached observer of the facts at once. This dual optics in description was a peculiar hallmark of Parkman's history writing.

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21. His failing eye-sight, arthritis, and other physical and nervous ailments which he called "The Enemy" also retarded the progress of the work. As for Parkman's health problems, see, for example, Mason Wade, *Francis Parkman: Heroic Historian* (1942; Hamden: Archon Books, 1972): 291-348. For further information on Parkman's biography, see also Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Francis Parkman, Historian as Hero: The Formative Years* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Otis A. Pease, *Parkman's History: The Historian as Literary Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953); and Charles Haight Farnham, *A Life of Francis Parkman* (1900; Honolulu: UP of the Pacific, 2002).

Both panoramic abstraction and paratactic detailedness conspired to create an impression of flatness and slowness throughout Parkman's texts. The paratactic jumble of individual transactions rendered his story slow, repetitive and anticlimactic, and the historical sequence was flattened out on an open synchronic field. Major events and minor ones, or the past scenes and the present ones were laid out on the same level in characteristic detail. His panoramic point of view also represented each historical scene spread "like a map," on which history was unfolded in serene uneventfulness and abstraction. Taken altogether, linear historical changes were imperceptible, or a series of small actions operated on history slowly and infinitesimally, with no catastrophic big change at work. This slowness and apparent inertia prevailed through Parkman's writings both in his panoramic representation and paratactic juxtaposition. It was most manifest when he attended to the natural settings of historical events, such as the calm "slumbering" Hudson, the western wilderness "sunk in savage torpor, wrapped in illimitable woods" and the like. In his narrative, human history was always embedded in the extremely slow pace of natural history, or "the history of American forest." No doubt, his sense of temporality was that of nature, a really vast and slow time-scale of natural historical *longue durée*, in contrast with a relatively short duration of human history.

The term "*longue durée*" might sound out of place and anachronistic, considering that it refers to a relatively recent idea of history, and that Fernand Braudel, the author of the term, distinguished it from the nineteenth-century history of events, or that of the short time span, which sketched each historic scene with then newly discovered documents, regardless of the more large-scale totality of history.[22] Nonetheless, there was certainly a historiographical

22. See Fernand Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences: The *Longue Durée*" (1958), reprinted in *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980): 25-54, especially 28-29. The term *longue durée* was coined by Braudel, but the idea can be traced back to Marc Bloc, who insisted that "the mighty convulsions of that vast, continuing development are perfectly capable of extending from the beginning of time to the present." His question is, "How, then, are we to believe that we understand these men, if we study them only in their reaction to circumstances peculiar to a moment?" See Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (1954; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), especially 23-39. The quotations are located in pages 34 and 35.

climate in nineteenth-century America that took into account a slow and vast duration of time, so that its style could only be described as history of *longue durée*, "a history that is almost changeless, the history of man in relation to his surroundings. It is a history which unfolds slowly and is slow to alter, often repeating itself and working itself out in cycles which are endlessly renewed."[23] When Parkman turned to American nature as a chief point of reference for his narrative, his colonial history merged with nature's temporality. The American wilderness was to Parkman what the Mediterranean was to Braudel. It was *the* main character of his history.

Parkman's nature, moreover, was not the same as what the Western world had long regarded as the timeless and fixed order of being. It was instead nature mobilized and temporalized, which people for the first time found to be in slow but constant transition. His history writing certainly could be counted as a case of American geographico-history due to its geographically oriented nature; after all, both panorama and parataxis highlighted a spatial dimension of historical narrative, rather than a temporal one. And yet, it was different in one crucial point from other examples of geographico-history which we examined in Chapter Five. The latter was a theoretical and metaphoric attempt at visualization of history, such as the mixture of verbal and cartographic representations, but Parkman's, on the other hand, was history directly grafted onto, as well as influenced by, American geographic reality. His vision of history was slow and apparently inert, but not timeless and dead static like other practices of mapping time.[24]

Parkman's historicity was based on such a renovated view of nature, which was not

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23. Braudel, "Preface to *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*," reprinted in *On History*, 3. As for other contemporary writers of *longue durée*, Wai Chee Dimock names Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, for instance. See Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time* (2006; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

24. As for the development of visualization of chronology and visual metaphors of time, see Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time: A History of the Timeline* (New York: Princeton Architecture Press, 2010). Timeline and other practices of so-called "time maps" take charge of graphic arrangement of chronological facts, while history involves the narrativization of each fact. See Rosenberg and Grafton, *Cartographies of Time*, 10-25.

perceptibly changing, but if it did at all, in the tremendously immense duration of time. To be more specific, his version of history of *longue durée* was epitomized in his employment of geological deep time. In the next chapter, our focus is upon the formation of his sense of temporality and the impact of modern earth science upon it. He once professed himself as a historian of American forest, but I argue, he was a historian of American rock as well.

Chapter Eight

History in Depth: Geological Imagination and Memories of the Landmass

I. The Temporalization of History and the Geological *Longue Durée*

History of forest and rock. Francis Parkman firmly believed that American history was engaged with American nature at any time. In *A Half-Century of Conflict* (1892), the last installment of his North American colonial history series, he explicated the natural cycle of life and decay which had governed the Maine woods "For untold ages," and went on to say that the same "vital force" controlled "all organized beings, from men to mushrooms." The passage is rather long, but worth quoting in full.

> For untold ages Maine had been one unbroken forest, and it was so still. Only along the rocky seaboard or on the lower waters of one or two great rivers a few rough settlements had gnawed slight indentations into this wilderness of woods, and a little farther inland some dismal clearing around a blockhouse or stockade let in the sunlight to a soil that had lain in shadow time out of mind. This waste of savage vegetation survives, in some part, to this day, with the same prodigality of vital force, the same struggle for existence and mutual havoc that mark all organized beings, from men to mushrooms. Young seedlings in millions spring every summer from the black mould, rich with the decay of those that had preceded them, crowding, choking, and killing each other, perishing by their very abundance; all but a scattered few, stronger than the rest, or more fortunate in position, which survive by blighting those about them. They in turn, as they grow, interlock their boughs, and repeat in a season or two the same process of mutual suffocation. (*HC*, 359)

In the June 1855 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Parkman published an article under the title of "The Forests and the Census." Its main point was to protest against the current dissipative ways of dealing with the American woods. He laid particular stress on the tremendous duration of nature's time (many centuries of forest growth), and appealed for the need to

discard the short-termism on the people's end ("the personal interest of the hour") and adapt instead to the long and slow time-scale of nature.[1] In his view, human history was always embedded within the natural historical *longue durée*.

Stationary as it looked, the enlarged time-scale was not the same as the eternal order of nature of the Classical *episteme*, nor as the typological atemporality of Puritanism, either. The eighteenth-century desire for universal order aimed at an all-embracing grand taxonomy of the physical world, and its signature Great Chain of Being was a product of the faith in the static completeness of reality, which was found essentially finite, unchanging, and able to be arranged on an explanatory reference grid.[2] Puritanical typology, too, presupposed an atemporal and fixed view of the world. Although Puritans were history-minded people with their pair concepts of type (precedent) and antitype (consequent), their idea of history was so far from historical dynamism and mutability. The process of typological prefiguration was not something that belongs to history, but rather what might be properly called prophecy or the reenactment of the prescribed design.

Parkman's history highlighted American nature, but that nature was not a static universe of the natural historically tabulated order, nor of the typologically predicted events. It instead was a slowly but irreparably changing world over the long term. What concerned his history was to measure and describe historical changes, not the timeless order of things. His subject was, as he once wrote in his journal, "America in a state of transition. Her original state — her present — England's present — we look to the future, her future," and the transition in America was a part of the long and slow "operations of Nature": "For a thousand ages her trees rose, flourished, and fell. In the autumn the vast continent glared at once with yellow and red and green; and when winter came, the ice of her waters groaned and cracked to the solitudes; and in the spring her savage streams burst their fetters, and bore down the refuse of the wilderness. It was half a world consecrated to the operations of

1. Francis Parkman, "The Forests and the Census," *The Atlantic Monthly* 55 (June 1885): 837.

2. As for the Classical epistemology of the eternally static universe, see "Introduction" of the present thesis.

Nature!" (*Journals*, 1: 277, 258).[3]

The history of western knowledge has recurred to the concept of time, or natural and social change over time. Right up to the Enlightenment period, people had thought the whole universe to be fundamentally timeless and uneventful. The turning point for the growing appreciation of temporality came around the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth, when the world and its constituents were found to have been in the process of uninterrupted transmutation since the beginning, and the static and timeless worldview of antiquity was finally shattered and being replaced with the renewed sense of temporality. Geology, a new type of earth science born in the late eighteenth century, was definitely one of the chief triggers for the intellectual shift towards universal temporalization and historicization. George Scrope, a British geologist of the day, summarized the impact of geology on other scientific studies: "The leading idea which is present in all our [geological] researches, and which accompanies every fresh observation, the sound which to the ear of the student of Nature seems continually echoes in every part of her works, is — Time! — Time! — Time!"[4] The geological principle of the slow and uniform transformation over the immense duration of time was about to re-format the contemporary sense of temporality, and this incipient notion of constant mutation would finally be confirmed by Darwinism.

Parkman was much concerned with the trend of modern natural sciences, and geology, among others, helped him to develop his own method of handling the past and historical

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3. The second passage was preceded by Parkman's thought on European historic associations: "A thousand associations throng on us at their name. The breezes of the Tweed are an atmosphere of poetry and song, chivalry and romance. They kindle the spirit of the enthusiast into flame — the dullest feels that wonder and romance are around him — thus have the deeds and the fancies of ages charmed that spot. And now turn thence to our dark unstoried woods! The poetic spark grows dull and dies, for there is nothing to fan it to life." (*Journals,* 1: 258). At first glance, Parkman downplayed American primeval nature in favor of the poetry of European historic associations, but the wordings in his depiction of American wilderness betrayed his fascination with nature's time.

4. George Poulett Scrope, *Memoir on the Geology of Central France; Including the Volcanic Formations of Auvergne, the Velay, and the Vivarais* (London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1827): 165

changes. In retrospect, his writings might seem to fall short of the full realization of historical dynamism. Still, he was a product of the age, and his historical accounts reflected the renewed sense of temporality especially in his usage of geological deep time. In this and the final chapter of the present thesis, I explore the geological imagination of Parkman's history or what I call "history in depth," and, in so doing, examine how the idea of history was changing as part of the ongoing transition of epistemology of temporality.

II. Geology in Nineteenth-Century America

Parkman's interest in geology had been nurtured since his early boyhood, as a part of his overall passion for natural history. His biographers suggest that the naturalist vein first grew on him while he stayed at his grandfather's farmhouse in Medford, Massachusetts at the age of eight through thirteen (1831-36), roaming around the neighboring wild woodland, the Five Mile Woods, now known as the Middlesex Fells.[5] It was during those frequent forest excursions there that he began the collection of minerals, which years later earned him a position of Curator of Mineralogy of the Harvard Natural History Society, as well as the first academic recognition from the same society when he donated a part of the collection in 1847, right after back from the Oregon Trail trip.[6] One of his early unpublished writings, moreover,

5. As for the earliest development of Parkman's interest in natural history during his forest excursions in Medford, see Charles Haight Farnham, *A Life of Francis Parkman* (1900; Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002): 12, 42-44; Mason Wade, *Francis Parkman: Heroic Historian* (1942; Hamden: Archon Book, 1972): 8; and Howard Doughty, *Francis Parkman* (1962; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983): 16.

6. The Harvard Natural History Society sent Parkman a letter of appreciation for his donation.

> Cambridge, June 28, 1847
> Francis Parkman,
>
> Dear Sir,
> Allow me to communicate to you the following note of the "Harvard Natural History Society" passed at a meeting held on the evening of the 18 inst.
> Voted;—"That the thanks of this society be communicated to Mr. Francis Parkman for his

firmly attests that his taste for natural history was of a significantly geological cast. The essay, written in August 1839 under the title of "Studies of Nature," started with a common praise for natural science — "Of all pursuits the cultivation of natural science tends most to improve the mind and improve the understanding" — and soon concentrated upon the geological conception of the earth's history.

> We are all born with an instinctive fondness for the beauties of nature. We all take pleasure in viewing a lofty mountain, a fertile valley, or a clear stream…. But suppose a man who has made nature his study, who, while searching into the great laws that govern her, has not neglected the tribes of living and inanimate objects to which she is indebted for life and beauty — suppose him to be placed where we were, and to be looking upon the same objects. The black and precipitous rocks lie piled in confusion above him, remind him of the period when that mountain emerged from the plain impelled by some irresistible subterranean power. He notices the deposits which through successive ages have accumulated at its base, and

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very valuable donation of a collection of minerals."

Very respectfully
Yours,
F. Marion Tower
Corresponding Secretary

(Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, box 1, folder 1847)

The Harvard Natural History Society was founded in 1837 by Harvard students interested in the study of natural history. Parkman was one of its members while in college, and, in addition to Curator of Mineralogy, served as Recording Secretary in 1842 and Corresponding Secretary in 1843. See *A Catalogue of the Officers and Members of the Harvard Natural History Society* (Cambridge: Metcalf and Company, 1848). The biological references of his service at the Harvard Natural History Society can be found in Farnham, *A Life of Francis Parkman,* 16, 44; Wade, *Francis Parkman*, 18; and Doughty, *Francis Parkman*, 25. The Society remained active at least until 1914, when the college paper, *The Harvard Crimson*, announced its meeting scheduled on January 13, 1914. In its issue for January 16, 1917, the same paper reported the Society was reorganized chiefly by the alumni. *The Harvard Crimson* was first published in 1873 and has kept going up to the present.

> compares the present appearance of that valley, enlivened by grazing herds, with its aspect in former ages, when it perhaps formed the bed of a stagnant lake, the abode of monsters, now happily extinct.[7]

To compare "the present appearance" with "its aspects in former ages" buried underneath — this was exactly what Parkman did in his histories, as I am going to show in this chapter. Even his adolescent studies of nature already featured the historical perspective, which, in turn, derived from the geological appreciation of subterranean temporality.

Only naturally, then, did Parkman imagine himself on a geological excursion during his historical research trips. Since his college days, he had frequented Northern New England and the Canadian border, a main stage for his historical narratives, and at one of those occasions, he compared his trip to the geological fieldwork of Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864). Silliman was a Yale geologist and a founder of the *American Journal of Sciences and Arts*, or better known as *Silliman's Journal*, in whose issue for April 1829, he reported on his previous year's visit to the White Mountains.[8] During his journey to the same New Hampshire ridge in 1841, Parkman remembered that journal article and found himself treading on the same track as the geologist did.

> The sides of the ravine, which runs directly up and down the mountain, are of decaying granite, which the bottom is formed by a trapdike. I ascended at first easily, but the way began to be steeper and the walls on each side more precipitous. Still I kept on until I came to a precipice about forty feet high and not far from perpendicular. I could see that this was followed by a similar one above. Professor Silliman, a year or two ago, ascended in this place, until, as he says, "further progress

7. Quoted in Wade, *Francis Parkman*, 352-52 and Doughty, *Francis Parkman,* 19. The entire essay is reprinted in Farnham, *A Life of Francis Parkman,* 49-50.

8. "Miscellaneous Notices of Mountain Scenery, and of Slides and Avalanches in the White and Green Mountains; from a Letter of the Editor — of the Late Rev. Carlos Wilcox, and of Mr. Theron Baldwin," *American Journal of Science and Arts* 15 (1829): 217-32, and for Silliman's report specifically, 217-22.

> was prevented by inaccessible precipices of the trap rock." The exploit of the professor occurred to me as I stood below and I determined that "inaccessible precipices" which had cooled his scientific ardor should prove no barrier to me. (*Journals*, 1: 13)

In terms of chronological order, the episode Parkman here referred to might not be Silliman's, but that of his disciple, Oliver P. Hubbard of Dartmouth College, who recounted his mountaineering of the Willey range of the White Mountains in the same journal in 1837.[9] Whoever was in Parkman's mind actually, the point is, he clearly recognized that his historical researches shared the same field with, or perhaps emulated, geology. In fact, he often came across parties of amateur and professional geologists during his trips, and exchanged information with them: "Luckily, Dr. [Charles T.] Jackson and his assistants in the state survey [New Hampshire State Geological Survey] were in the town, and from them I got a full and accurate account of the country and of the requisites for my expedition" (*Journals*, 1: 22).

The intercourses with field geologists left a lasting mark upon Parkman's mind, so he intermittently reverted to a geologist figure in his semi-autobiographical writings. In an unsigned *Knickerbocker* piece, "The Ranger's Adventure," for instance, he introduced "a self-taught geologist, who had filled a back room of his old farm-house with several tons of specimens, gathered from the mountains far and wide; and, dexterously placing his chair against the door, would entertain his imprisoned guests with geological discussions, and theories of the earth, new alike to the Vulcanians and the Neptunians."[10] At the level of

9. Oliver O. Hubbard, "Observations Made during an Excursion to the White Mountains, in July, 1837," *American Journal of Science and Arts* 34 (1838): 105-24. See also Wade, ed., *The Journals of Francis Parkman*, 1: 331n. Oliver P. Hubbard (1809-1900) was professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy and Geology at Dartmouth College, and married one of Silliman's daughters.

10. Francis Parkman, "The Ranger's Adventure," *The Knickerbocker, or New-York Monthly Magazine 25* (March 1845): 198. This was a half-autobiographical, half-fictional story of a Boston college boy enjoying the Western Massachusetts rural life for the first time. Parkman contributed another story to the next month issue of the same magazine, which also derived partly from his own experience of

phraseology, too, his composition relied on geological terms and metaphors, such as "This subterranean character of the mischief," and "black sheets of limestone rock… clothed with all the interest of an historic memory."[11] His close acquaintance with Louis Agassiz, a champion of the polygenesis theory of earth history, also must have directed his attention to the contemporary geological debate Agassiz stirred up, and he actually touched upon it in some of his personal letters.[12] By any standard, he was more than familiar with geology. It undoubtedly constituted a crucial part in his historiographical method.

In nineteenth-century America, geology attracted much public attention and provided a common topic for society at large. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a dramatic increase of publications on geology. Before 1760, one survey reports, there were only seventy references to geological phenomena, and most of them were descriptive accounts or religious interpretations of two massive New England earthquakes, the first on October 29, 1727 and the second, November 18, 1755. In the next one hundred years, geological sciences developed significantly, yielding a variety of insights into the mechanism of the earth, and as a matter of fact, the rate of publication went up as the years rolled on. "[I]n 1850 nearly 1,000 references on the earth sciences appeared in American books and

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wildwood excursions. See Parkman, "The Scalp-Hunter," *The Knickerbocker, or New-York Monthly Magazine* 25 (April 1845): 297-303; especially, the passage of a dangerous cliff hanging in page 301 was almost a paraphrase from Parkman's own experience at the same precipice as that which reminded him of Professor Silliman's geological excursion quoted above.

11. The first phrase is from Parkman's autobiographical letter to George Ellis, 1864 (*Letters,* 1: 178), and the second one is from Parkman, "James Fenimore Cooper," *North American Review* 74 (January 1852): 156-57.

12. As for Parkman's interest in the debate between the monogenesis and polygenesis theories, see, for example, his letter to Ephraim George Squier, dated April 2, 1850, in which he referred to Charles Pickering's *Races of Man and Their Geographic Distribution* (1848) as an example of the monogenetic worldview and contrasted it with Agassiz's aim at "proving that both men and animals originated from different acts of creative power at different parts of the earth's surface" (*Letters*, 1: 69).

Parkman once courted to one of Agassiz's daughter, Ida, unsuccessfully. As for his courtship to Ida and his disappointment, see his letters to his cousin, Mary Dwight Parkman, in 1852 and 1862 to 1863 (*Letters*, 1: 98-99, 148-51, 168-70).

periodicals.… By the mid-nineteenth century, published information about geological phenomena was widely disseminated."[13] The lecture halls were packed with people listening to eminent geologists like Silliman and Edward Hitchcock of Amherst College, and those inspired by these geology lectures and literature grew quite eager to hunt for minerals and fossils for themselves. The development of popular domestic tourism in the 1820's and 1830's being a contributing factor, geological sites were one of the favorite touristic attractions for the contemporary public, whom *The New-England Magazine* even called "geologically mad."[14] Another testimony to the American geology fad in the nineteenth century was Thomas Cole's landscape paintings, in which different geological motifs recurred frequently (the most famous one was an erratic boulder, placed in the center of each piece of *The Course of Empire* series so that it worked as a reference point for all the five historical landscapes).[15] Given the wide currency of geological knowledge and the people's interest in it, we can safely assume that geology had a strong intellectual appeal to many

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13. Robert M. Hazen and Margaret H. Hazen, "Neglected Geological Literature: An Introduction to a Bibliography of American-Published Geology, 1669 to 1850 (Abstract)" in Cecil J. Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America: Proceedings of the New Hampshire Bicentennial Conference on the History of Geology* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1979): 34-35.

14. "Cabinet Council," *The New-England Magazine* 8 (April 1835): 320. John F. Sears points out that geological wonders, like Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, fascinated the contemporary tourists with their allusion to the enormous scale of earth's history. See Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (1989; Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), especially Chapter 2 "Mammoth Cave: Theatre of the Cosmic," 31-48, and Chapter 4 "The Making of an American Tourist Attraction: The Willey House in the White Mountains," 72-86.

15. As for Thomas Cole's use of geological motifs, see Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875* (1980; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially Chapter 4 "The Geological Timetable: Rock," 41-70; Thomas M. Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality & Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008): 173-83; Rebecca Bedell, *The Anatomy of Nature: Geology & American Landscape Painting, 1825-1875* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially Chapter 1 "Thomas Cole and the Fashionable Science," 17-45; and Ellwood C. Parry III, "Acts of God, Acts of Man: Geological Ideas and the Imaginary Landscaped of Thomas Cole," in Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America*, 53-71.

different levels of society.[16]

Charles Lyell, whose *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) was one of the major impacts for the rise of popular geology, witnessed how his own field of study was provoking the intellectual curiosity of the American people, every so often while touring around the North American continent in 1841-42 and 1845-46.[17] For his Lowell Foundation lectures in the fall of 1841, forty five hundred people flocked to a three-thousand-seat hall at a time, so "it was necessary to divide them into two sets, and repeat to one of them the next afternoon the lecture delivered on the preceding evening."[18] He came across his common readers during his stay,[19] and once in his excursion through New Hampshire and Maine, moreover, he found village people "most curious to learn the names of the rocks and plants we had collected, and told us that at the free-school they had been taught the elements of geology and botany."[20] Although geological discussions on the high antiquity of the earth often

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16. As for the popularity of geology in nineteenth-century America, see also Dennis R. Dean, "The Influence of Geology on American Literature and Thought," in Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America*," 289-303.

17. Lyell published popular travel accounts for his two visits to America: Lyell, *Travels in North America, in the Years 1841-42, with Geological Observations on the Unites States, Canada, and Nova Scotia,* 2 vols. (1845; New York: Wiley & Halsted, 1856); and *A Second Visit to the United States of North America,* 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1849). In general, these books are half filled with the findings from his geological excursions in America and Canada, while the other half is his observations and commentaries on the customs and manners of American society, such as popular education, southern slavery, and universal suffrage, among others.

The first thing Lyell did in his second visit to America, Fall 1845 was the excursion to the White Mountains to explore the geological features of the district (See Lyell, *Second Visit*, 1: 30-87). He passed Conway, the Willey Slide, and the Crawford Notch and ascended Mount Washington, and this happened to be nearly the same route as Parkman treaded in his research trip cited above.

18. Lyell, *Travels in North America*, 1: 86. Besides the twelve-lecture series in Boston, Lyell gave a short course on geology in Philadelphia, February 1842 (See Lyell, *Travels*, 1: 160). He was also invited to take the podium in New York, but that was not be realized, because he didn't have enough time to do so. (See Lyell, *Travels*, 1: 194)

19. See, for example, Lyell, *A Second Visit*, 2: 147 and 160.

20. Lyell, *A Second Visit*, 1: 57.

courted the censures of the traditional Christian community, these examples of popular geological education in American society confirmed his belief that the geological theories would soon supersede the biblical worldview: "no educated people will ever tolerate an idle, illiterate, or stationary priesthood. That this is impossible, the experience of the last quarter of a century in New England has fully proved."[21] Even blessed with "the oldest monuments of the earth's history" and the "ancient strata developed on a grander scale" than in any other country, too, America was nothing if not an ideal place for the development and popularization of geology.[22]

What did people learn from geology then? It restructured, among other things, their sense of the past as well as their recognition of the time scale as a whole.[23] Ralph Waldo Emerson referred to the reformed temporality in his writings and lectures with particularly geological terminology.[24] His essay on "Fate" (1860), for one, employed a familiar Christian metaphor, the Book of Nature, which, as it soon turned out, went perfectly well with the

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21. Lyell, *A Second Visit*, 1: 174.

22. Lyell, *Travels*, 1: 15.

23. Of course, geology was a practical science, indispensable to mining, so its contemporary popularity can be explained from such a utilitarian point of view. As Lyell noted in his travelogues, the best prize for each state geological survey program was anthracite coal measures. In the present discussion, however, my interest centers around the intellectual and psychological effects of new geological theories upon nineteenth-century people, which, I argue, is a best clue in understanding Parkman's historiographical method.

24. Emerson was overtly critical of the Lyellian unpoetic mechanism of earth history, but according to Peter Balaam, he was at the same time fascinated with the uniformitarian balance between destruction and creation, which seemed to him to corroborate the universal design of compensation. See Balaam, *Misery's Mathematics: Mourning, Compensation, and Reality in Antebellum American Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2009), especially Chapter 1 "'The Laws of Our Learning: Emerson's Grief and the Geological Principles of Loss," 17-71.

An Emerson's contemporary, Herman Melville also featured a great geological curiosity, the Balanced Rock, in *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (1852), and a utilitarian geologist named Margoth in *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (1876). As for other literary references to geology, see Dennis R. Dean, "The Influence of Geology on American Literature and Thought," in Schneer, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Geology in America*, 289-303.

stratigraphical image of earth formations. Nature was literally a book, recording its own history in the layered stratum pages.

> The book of Nature is the book of Fate. She turns the gigantic pages, — leaf after leaf, — never returning one. One leaf she lays down, a floor of granite; then a thousand ages, and a bed of slate; a thousand ages, and a measure of coal; a thousand ages, and a layer of marl and mud: vegetable forms appear; her first misshapen animals, zoophyte, trilobium, fish; then, saurians, -- rude forms, in which she has only blocked her future statue, concealing under these unwieldly monsters the fine type of her coming king. The face of the planet cools and dries, the races meliorate, and man is born. But when a race has lived its term, it comes no more again.[25]

While man reigned as the latest and most advanced race in the geological scale of being, Emerson's imagination also dug down to the deepest bottom of earth history, a floor of granite, which proved a fit symbol for what he called "the elementary reality," hidden under the superficial strata of domestic or civil life: "The granite is curiously concealed under a thousand formations and surfaces, under fertile soils, and grasses, and flowers, under well-manured, arable fields, and large towns and cities, but it makes the foundation of these, and is always indicating its presence by slight but sure signs. So is it with the Life of our life; so close does that also hide."[26] Whether stress was placed on the top layer or the bottom, human history was thus grafted onto earth history and understood in a geological manner. The past, in other words, turned out something found deep under our feet.

To sum up, geology affected the nineteenth-century sense of temporality in two ways. First, the time scale expanded dramatically as geological knowledge prevailed through society. In the authorized Christian precepts, the world was created less than six thousand years ago and had never changed since then. Indeed, early earth sciences up to the late eighteenth century were assorted attempts to squeeze all the developments of earth history

25. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Fate," *Essays & Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983): 949.

26. Emerson, "Lectures on the Times," *Essays & Lectures*, 169.

into that short time span. And yet, nineteenth-century geology discovered the earth's crust had been changing under the influence of uniform mechanical agencies, which operated slowly but constantly throughout the indefinitely vast duration of time. Compared with geological time, Emerson wrote in "Progress of Culture," "The oldest empires, — what we called venerable antiquity, — now that we have true measures of duration, show like creations of yesterday."[27] Moreover, this immense stretch of time was recognized in the image of layered strata, which was the second characteristic of the reformed temporality. As in Emerson's vision of deep time, each stage or layer of history was imagined to be independent of contiguous ones. The vertical scale of historical strata represented the irrevocable and upward course of natural/human progress. Although the past extended far back into the remotest antiquity of the earth, as Emerson again put it, it was physically "so close" and "indicating its presence by slight but sure signs" seen through the surface.[28]

The renewed manner of time perception naturally brought forth a new type of historical narrative. History found a methodological possibility in geology because of its theoretical potency as a historical science. George Bancroft, perhaps the then most eminent American historian, once designated the geologist as a practical model for the historian, evaluating the geologist's ability "to ascertain, in some degree, the chronology of our planet; to demonstrate the regularity of its structure where it seemed most disturbed; and where nature herself was at fault, and trail of her footsteps broken, to restore the just arrangement of strata that had been crushed into confusion, or turned over in apparently inexplicable and

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27. Emerson, "Progress of Culture," *Letters and Social Aims: The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. VIII (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1883): 202.

28. Thomas M. Allen discusses that nineteenth-century America first recognized the connection between the geological makeup of the American continent and the political history of the republic. According to Allen, the classic stadialism (or the four-stage model of human history) was amplified into a larger scale though geological idioms. See Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality & Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), especially Chapter 4 "Time in the Land," 146-85. As for the general overview of geology's impact on American historicity, I am much indebted to Allen's thesis.

incongruous folds."[29] If the geologist was the one who could read and set in order the buried signs of the earth's history, the historian also sought the regularity and uniformity of otherwise disorderly historical process in the layered structure of the past and the present. Besides, the geological outlook meant a lot to American historians specifically. For, it presented the possibility of redeeming the relatively short national history with the vast and rich "soil" of sedimented time. Herbert B. Adams, in whose historical seminaries at Johns Hopkins University "books are treated like mineralogical specimens, passed about from hand to hand, examined, and tested," succinctly pointed out the scale enlargement of American history itself: "America is not such a new world as it seems to many foreigners. Geologists tell us that our continent is the oldest of all."[30] Parkman, too, was one of those geologically-informed historians, and his histories should be reassessed with due attention to its vertical conception of temporality, or "history in depth."

One last example before we move on to Parkman's histories. That is, John Harris's *The Pre-Adamite Earth: Contributions to Theological Science* (1849).[31] The principal aim of the book was to reconcile the geologically liberated time scale with the traditional Christian worldview. This itself was nothing rare even in the nineteenth century, as was plainly shown in Edward Hitchcock's *The Religion of Geology and its Connected Sciences* (1851). What made Harris's book particularly interesting, however, was that he chose a geologist as a guide of history, who led the reader one stratum after another down to the subterranean past.

> Let us descend with him [the geologist], and traverse an ideal section of a portion of

29. George Bancroft, *The Necessity, the Reality, and the Promise of the Progress of the Human Race: Oration Delivered before the New York Historical Society, November 20, 1854* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1854): 21.

30. Herbert B. Adams, "Methods of Historical Study," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, vol. II (Baltimore: N. Murray, Publication Agent, Johns Hopkins University, 1884): 103, 22.

31. The book, along with Harris's other writings, was well accepted especially among the American people of the time. Harris was a British-born congregational pastor and educator, awarded a Doctorate of Divinity by Brown University in 1838.

> the earth's curst. Quitting the living surface of the green earth, and entering on our downward path, our first step may take us below the dust of Adam, and beyond the limits of recorded time. From the moment we leave the mere surface-soil, and touch even the nearest of the tertiary beds, all traces of human remains disappear, so that let our grave be as shallow as it may in even the latest stratified bed, we have to make it in the dust of a departed world. Formation now follows formation, composed chiefly of sand, and clay, and lime, and presenting a thickness of more than a thousand feet each. As we descend though these, one of the most sublime fictions of mythology becomes sober truth, for at our every step an age flies past.[32]

Just like Emerson's passages cited above, Harris's popular geology effected the estrangement and familiarization of the past at once. It featured "an ideal section of a portion of the earth's crust," where the strata was regularly piled up so that the past could be measured and periodized on a simple vertical scale. Only a few perpendicular inches required a tremendous duration of time to form, and the miles of formations were a constant reminder that "the days and years of geology are ages and cycles of ages."[33] And yet, Harris's wording connoted the past was somehow accessible, despite its daunting remoteness. One downward step was enough to go "beyond the limits of recorded time," and "the mere shell of the earth takes us back through an unknown series of ages, in which creation appears to have followed creation at the distance of vast intervals between."[34] The past was temporarily unreachable, but physically so close, lying almost domesticated within easy reach.

This popular vision of the geological past — remote but accessible — was what Parkman employed in his historical narratives. His sense of history was informed by the geological and stratigraphical worldview. Just like Emerson and Harris, he imagined time as something

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32. John Harris, *The Pre-Adamite Earth: Contributions to Theological Science* (1849; Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1854): 67.

33. Harris, *The Pre-Adamite Earth*, 70.

34. Harris, *The Pre-Adamite Earth*, 66.

accumulated one pile after another. The past was remote but somehow open to access, even palpable and decipherable. His history writing was a realization of this geological temporality and historicity. He uncovered the hitherto buried past, persisting with the relationship between the past in depth and the present on the surface.

III. Geological Imaginations in Parkman's Historical Writings

As we have seen in the last chapter, one of the most striking features of Parkman's history was its recurring panoramic viewpoint. A self-admitted devotee of "the history of American forest," he had every reason to employ a panoramic style in his history, whose main focus was always on the vast sylvan expanse of the North American continent. Highly pictorial as it was, however, his description of the grand wilderness, if left as it was, could not but be flat and devoid of individual differences and historical development. The prevailing pattern of his panoramic representation was that of apparent inertia and uneventfulness.[35] Identifying with his hero's broad viewpoint from the top, Parkman presented a far-reaching, but strangely tranquil and neutral scene of the wild life. Bark lodges and log cabins lay visible "on the open plain," "Squaws labored, warriors lounged in the sun, naked children whooped and gambolled on the grass," and a half-score of Indian villages were seen "[s]cattered along the valley, among the adjacent hills, or over the neighboring prairie" (*LS*, 934). The whole tableau of the Indian life was thus exposed in maximum lucidity. No obscurity was allowed here, but everything was visibly evident, just as in the Brueghelian throng.

The effect of such illustrative redundancy was to retard the pace of the passage, and depersonalize and flatten the scene into a smooth-faced, low-keyed generalization. In the imaginary recreation of the wild Western landscape, Parkman would rather present every possible option on the surface than delimit his description into a single storyline. Its all-too-

35. For more details on the contemporary reception of Parkman's descriptive style, see note 6 of Chapter Six. The "illusion of participation" is the term David Levin applies to Parkman's and other romantic historians' composition. See Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959): 19, for instance.

evident foregroundedness canceled any internal tension and dynamism under the surface.[36] Even the daily lives of the Indian families, such as laboring, lounging, whooping and gambolling, never raised the kinetic level of the passage; on the contrary, they were as if transfixed quietly on a museum habitat display, severed from the historical context. As far as this flat, uneventful surface of narrative went, the dynamics of historical causation was not properly fulfilled. It was instead in the vertical dimension of depth where Parkman inscribed historical phases.

Now it is worth while getting back to Parkman's travelogue, *The Oregon Trail* (1849), in which he intimated his understanding of the past in terms of depth. Roving over the Wild West, he sometimes climbed up a hill and enjoyed a panoramic view from it, as his historical figures did in his histories. When he was with a migrating party of the Ogillallah Indians, he once "rode to the top [of a cliff]" to note "from this point I could look down on the savage procession as it passed just beneath my feet, and far on the left I could see its thin and broken line, visible only at intervals, stretching away for miles among the mountains" (*OT*, 244). For the purpose of the present study, what is particularly interesting about this panoramic passage is that it came immediately after a scene of a dark, claustrophobic grotto, into which Parkman found himself irresistibly allured and beckoned. These two successive scenes not just emphasized the contrast between the broad Western landscape and the tunnel vision in the cave, but they also showed an essential characteristic of Parkman's historical consciousness. Deep down in the crevice, he discovered the sediment of the past deposited silently.

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36. As for the flat foregrounded style of description, I draw inspiration from Erich Auerbach's classic study of European literary realism, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. According to Auerbach, European literary realism had developed from the Homeric two-dimensional flatness into the recognition of "the deep subsurface layers, which were static for the observers of classical antiquity, began to move." What mattered in modern realism, in other wards, was the interiority or depth of an individual life. Auerbach also suggests the flat foregrounded style is anti-historical, while the individualist deep perspective stirs up the dimension of history. I will return to this point later in this chapter. The above-cited line is from Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1953; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003): 45.

> After we had been advancing for several hours, through passages always narrow, often obstructed and difficult, I saw at a little distance on our right a narrow opening between two high, wooded precipices. All within seemed darkness and mystery. In the mood in which I found myself, something strongly impelled me to enter.… I moved forward, determined to explore the mystery to the bottom, and soon became involved among the pines. The genius of the place exercised a strange influence upon my mind. Its faculties were stimulated into extraordinary activity, and as I passed along, many half-forgotten incidents, and the images of persons and things far distant, rose rapidly before me, with surprising distinctness. In that perilous wilderness, eight hundred miles removed beyond the faintest vestige of civilization, the scenes of another hemisphere, the seat of ancient refinement passed before me, more like a succession of vivid paintings than any mere dreams of the fancy. (*OT*, 243-44)[37]

As if in trance, Parkman then saw the illusions of "the church of St. Peter's illumined on the evening of Easter-Day," "the peak of Mount Etna towering above its inky mantle of clouds," "the gloomy vaulted passages and the narrow cells of the Passionist covenant," and "the melancholy Coliseum and the crumbling ruins of the Eternal City" (*OT*, 244). That is, Rome, "the seat of ancient refinement" as Parkman put it, or *the* past of Western civilization. Most intriguingly, that past was found sedimented in the subterraneous dimension. While the present landscape spread out horizontally and panoramically in the passage that followed, the cave scene represented the past vertically down in depth.

In his study of the development of European literary realism, Erich Auerbach identifies

37. There is a corresponding trance scene in Parkman's Oregon Trail journal. Dated August 1 [1846], the entry goes like this: "Fairly among the mts. Rich, grassy valley — plenty of gooseberries and currants — dark pine mts. — an opening dell that tempted me to ride up into it, and here in the cool pine woods I recalled old feelings, and old and well remembered poetry. Climbed a steep hill — on the left, the mts. and the black pine forests — far down, the bare hills, and threading the valley below came the long, straggling procession of Inds" (*Journals*, 2: 466).

history as dynamic forces operating deep under the surface. The mentality of modern realism, Auerbach suggests, was the will to break on through the flat, everything-in-view foreground and deepen its insight into the interiority of the world, that is, "a historical third dimension," "a deep subsurface movement, the unfolding of historical forces."[38] Modern realism was nothing but an expression of "a historical perspective in depth."[39] Even if history was imagined as something in depth, of course, one might reasonably ask, what was uncovered by the insight into the "deep subsurface movement"? Or, in other words, why did Parkman conjure up the scenes of "ancient refinement" in the middle of the American wilderness? We will return to this question later in this chapter, but for the moment let us note that there was "a historical third dimension" stretching under the serene and uneventful guise of Parkman's panoramic history, and that this concept of historical depth was literalized in his geologically informed attention to memories of the soil. Throughout his North American colonial history itself, the notion of geological deep time recurred in a variety of forms. To take an example, it was found in his preoccupation with "rocks" in his narratives.

Parkman was a historian of rocks, as well as that of forests. More often than not, he paired the two in his descriptions of colonial America: "the island rocks clouded with screaming sea-fowl, and the forests breathing piny odors from the shore" (*PF*, 168); "There was a kindred band, the Nation of the White Fish, among the rocks and forests north of Three Rivers" (*JS*, 621); "a lofty barrier of rock and forest extending along the southern shore of the Bay of Fundy" (*HC*, 697); and "Cape Blomedon reared its bluff head of rock and forest above the sleeping waves" (*MW*, 1029).[40] In its pioneering days, America *was* the land of forests and rocks, indeed. But even so, Parkman's narratives put inordinately strong stress on rocks. Among others, his favorites were the Rock of Quebec in *Pioneers of France in the*

38. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 33, 44.

39. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 321.

40. The combination of forest and rock appears most in the first two books of Parkman's series, *Pioneers of France in the New World* (1865) and *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century* (1867).

New World and *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century*, Starved Rock, also known as the Rock of St. Louis in *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, and Rogers Rock in *Montcalm and Wolfe*, and each of these rocks held quite an important position in the whole design of his history. Here let us examine Parkman's descriptions of Starved Rock and its environs for instance — the rock he had featured since his first historical piece, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, and all through his literary career.

Cartography occupied a special place in Parkman's historical narratives, as we discussed in Chapter Six. His history was composed of a series of verbal maps, actually.[41] The whole process began with preliminary efforts to identify the locations of historic sites. An episodic note, "The Illinois Town," inserted right in the middle of *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, recounted one of such researches, and what he was then searching for was Starved Rock or the craggy platform on which La Salle built Fort St. Louis in 1682-83. Parkman first explained that he had looked carefully into the contemporary documents and maps, and then arrived at a reasonable conclusion that the site was located on the south bank of the Illinois River, opposite the present town of Utica, where the great Indian town, originally called Kaskaskia, used to thrive. The rest of the story showed how he visited Utica to ascertain the truth of his hypothesis and succeeded in establishing the exact positions of the Indian town and the rock. And, once confirmed, the site was to be incorporated into his narrative in terms of its geographic, as well as historical, import.

In this episode of "The Illinois Town," Parkman strenuously associated the historical past with the present. The scene of his interview with the inhabitants of Utica illustrated how it was. Satisfied with his own firsthand investigation around the site, Parkman next requested a talk with the locals to gain further corroboration, but obviously, they did not

41. Parkman found a friend of the same taste in Orsamus H. Marshall, a local historian of Buffalo, NY, who also devoted himself to identifying the locations of historic sites, and they kept up a regular correspondence with each other. Compared with Parkman's style of writing, Marshall's writings are rather crude in its setup, look like a simple accumulation of raw materials. See Marshall, *The Historical Writings of the Late Orsamus H. Marshall, Relating to the Early History of the West* (Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1887). Although the title pretends as if this is a history of the American West, it is actually concerned with historic sites of upstate New York.

know anything about the history of the place. He then put forth a series of questions and hypotheses to see how they reacted. Is any Indian remains found in the neighborhood? Is there any spot where they are more numerous than elsewhere?

> "If," I added, "I am right in the belief, the great rock beyond the river is the one which the first explorers occupied as a fort; and I can describe it to you from their accounts of it, though I have never seen it, except from the top of the hill where the trees on and around it prevented me from seeing any part but the front." The men present now gathered around to listen. "The rock," I continued, "is nearly a hundred and fifty feet high, and rises directly from the water. The front and two sides are perpendicular and inaccessible; but there is one place where it is possible for a man to climb up, though with difficulty. The top is large enough and level enough for houses and fortifications." Here several of the men exclaimed: "That's just it." "You've hit it exactly." (*LS*, 881-82)

Parkman thus excavated the long forgotten memory of a historic site and laid it open side by side with the present-day locality. It was a kind of popular education in American history. Parkman showed the uninformed townsmen what kind of place they were living in and made them realize they were deeply connected with history, and that many layers of historical strata were buried right underneath their feet.[42]

On the textual level, the pairing of the past and the present predominated in Parkman's narratives. Examples abound all through the series of *France and England in North America* but, for the moment, a few samples are enough to show its basic pattern. On some occasions, Parkman simply put the past and the present side by side in the text: "Fort Caroline, now Fort San Mateo, was repaired; and two redoubts, or small forts, were thrown up to guard the

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42. Parkman also detailed his visit to Utica and interview with its townsmen in a letter to John G. Shea shortly after his return to Boston. Basically, it was to the same effect with the published version of "The Illinois Town." See *Letters*, 2: 18-19. Besides, some additional notes on the Illinois town can be found in *La Salle*, especially 834-35n, 934-35n.

mouth of the River of May, — one of them near the present lighthouse at Mayport, and the other across the river on Fort George Island"(*PF*, 127). On other occasions, a footnote did its work to explain the historical implications of a site, as he identified Fort Orange with "The site of the Phœnix Hotel" in Albany, NY (*JS*, 560n), or located an old Indian village called Ganneious or Ganéyout "on an arm of the lake a little west of the present town Fredericksburg," Ontario, Canada (*CF*, 107n). When a place evoked two or more historical associations, moreover, he named each of them and sorted them out in order of time. Virtually all major historic sites were thus represented in terms of their internal correspondence between the past and the present. The current state of order now proved dependent, or to be exact, literally incumbent on that of the former ages.[43]

Sometimes a place name itself could be a reminder of long-lost historic associations, or even the antiquity of the continent. In his review article of E. G. Squier's book on aboriginal monuments in New York and Lewis H. Morgan's study on the Iroquois, Parkman stressed the historical importance of "the names by which they [the aboriginals] designated spots where American towns have since arise." A good many of those ancient names had been long overwritten with newer inappropriate ones, but if successfully restored, just as Parkman did for the ancient town of Kaskaskia, "the sonorous names" of the American antiquity must have aroused the memories of places. "[T]he time may come," he believed, "when good taste will have sufficient sway in our republic to cause the restoration of the ancient titles of fields, streams, and mountains."[44] The North American continent was a vast palimpsest stratified with different levels of place names. It had a rich historical or prehistorical background for every event that had transpired on it, so that "in America history in large part was exactly a history of origins — a uniquely documented moment

43. The pairing of the past and the present are particularly numerous in the closing chapter of *A Half-Century of Conflict*.

44. All the quotations in this paragraph are from the closing paragraph of Francis Parkman, "Indian Antiquities in North America," *Christian Examiner* 50 (May 1851): 417-28.

It is an interesting coincident — or maybe an inevitable result — that Lyell too gave a critical comment on American place names taken from those of ancient cities like Syracuse, Rome, Troy, and so on, and hoped for the restoration of the original Indian place names. See Lyell, *Travels*, 1: 53.

when civilized man came face to face with the conditions of his prehistoric beginnings."[45]

Under the surface of the American soil, fertile sources of history lay dormant layer upon layer. Parkman's mission was to reconstruct — or one might say, resurrect — long-buried historic associations and make them legible in the present context, just as if to decipher a palimpsest, where the previous scripts were seen through the subsequent one. The reader in turn learned about the hitherto unidentified dimension of the country, which actually proved quite accessible once he or she acquired historical literacy to understand the buried signs of the country's past. In Parkman's history lesson, the highest priority was to visit and set foot on historic ground, actually or imaginarily. "Go to the banks of the Illinois where it flows by the village of Utica," he once said, "and stand on the meadow that borders it on the north," and you will see the memories of the place looming out of the very soil and have an almost physical sense of the past. "*Now stand in fancy on this same spot in the early autumn of the year 1680. You are in the midst of the great town of the Illinois, — hundreds of mat-covered lodges, and thousands of congregated savages.* Enter one of their dwellings: they will not think you an intruder. Some friendly squaw will lay a mat for you by the fire; you may seat yourself upon it, smoke your pipe, and study the lodge and its inmates by the light that streams through the holes at the top" (Italics mine; *LS*, 869). Under Parkman's guidance, the past felt surprisingly close and accessible, and the reader was continually encouraged to take an imaginary walk into the bygone days.

Showing a horizontal expanse of the continent flatly unfolded, Parkman's history at the same time suggested there was a dimension of depth latent under it, and that was where historicity or the dynamics of historical changes worked itself. This type of historical apprehension was fostered by the contemporary development of geology and the people's interest in it. The historicizing influence of geology was not limited to the small membership of the scientific community, but pervaded every aspect of the entire intellectual life of the day. As we touched upon early in this chapter, the public lecture movement, among other things, took a leading part in the promotion of geology in America. As Angela G. Ray suggests, audiences were attracted to the geological lecture chiefly because of its visual

45. Doughty, *Francis Parkman*, 91.

presentation devices, like illustrative drawings, experimental apparatuses, and other stage gimmicks.[46] More significantly, however, what really gave currency to geology was the growing awareness of the mutability of the universe, which had been long unnoticed behind the thick authoritative veil of the static world order until as late as the late eighteenth century. Geology was one crucial precondition for the full temporalization of the Western world. Through geology, again, "history" shed off its former descriptive and static connotation and assumed its present-day significance of dynamic becoming.

Francis Parkman's works and other contemporary historical narratives should be understood in such a context of the temporalization of the Western worldview. The nineteenth century was a transitional period in the development of history writing when the static descriptions of the eternal order and the temporal narratives of historical changes intermixed indistinctly with each other. The age of Parkman took a tentative step to the modern dynamic conception of history. While the epistemological focus shifted from order to change, and stasis to dynamism, geology provided an effective measure to observe and record temporal changes. For Parkman's history writing specifically, the geological model of stratified temporality was crucial in imagining the history of the American wilderness and its people. His "history in depth" came into being in the midst of universal historicization via geological imagination.

IV. Argument from Analogy and Deep Connection

Once modern geology enlarged the time scale and showed the remote past lying under the mere shell of the surface crust, this sense of temporality ensured the smooth accessibility to the antiquity. With a discerning eye, Parkman might say, one could detect and interpret the long-buried vestiges of ancient history. If we revert once again to the cave scene of *The Oregon Trail,* however, it would appear that the explorations of history in depth led to totally unexpected findings. Deep in the grotto, "eight hundred miles removed beyond the faintest vestige of civilization, the scenes of another hemisphere, the seat of ancient refinement

46. Angela G. Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005): 94, 174.

passed before me, more like a succession of vivid paintings than any mere dreams of the fancy." "The seat of ancient refinement" is, as above-noted, Rome, the authentic antiquity of the Western civilization.

One might reasonably ask why "the scenes of another hemisphere" had to be conjured up in such an unlikeliest place as a nondescript hollow in the American wilderness. From 1843 through 1844, Parkman made the grand tour of European countries, and Rome was a part of the itinerary, to be sure. But, even if the phantasmagoria derived from his personal memories, it did not completely justify that out-of-place flashback. A clue can be found in Parkman's fledgling piece of poetry, "The New-Hampshire Ranger" (1845), published a year previous to his Oregon Trail expedition. Here Parkman introduced a precise counterpart to the illusory cave scene in the American West. Traveling on horseback, "a lonely wanderer / in the wild land of Spain" finds himself listening to the whisperings of the rocks, which, predictably enough, awaken memories of a remote place.

> I looked on her [the moon]: it seemed to me
> That I low sounds could hear,
> As if the spirits of the rocks
> Were whispering in my ear.
> And strange vague thoughts came thronging,
> Thickly and dreamily;
> Thoughts of loves and battles
> In ages long gone by,
> O'er rock and stone my steed trampled on;
> Wild chafed the haughty beast;
> He champed the bit, he shook the rein,
> And tossed his sable crest.[47]

47. Francis Parkman, "The New-Hampshire Ranger," *The Knickerbocker, or New-York Monthly Magazine* 26 (August 1845): 147.

First, "the spirits of the rocks" call up some historic associations, which, though not identified clearly, must be some sort of history of the place locked in "rock and stone my steed trampled on." But the thoughts of the equestrian rambler soon wander away, for apparently no reason, into "a softening memory… of dear New England, / Her mountains and her woods, / Her savage rocks, her headlong streams, / Her pure and gentle floods."[48] In the middle of the American desert, Parkman recollected the European antiquity, while American nature was evoked in the Spanish wilderness. It is as if local history was never local, but connected with those of other localities.

Charles Lyell must have concurred with this idea of extensive connectedness over the globe. The central tenet of uniformitarian geology was that the present is the key to the past. The observable causes of geological phenomena at the present day had operated uniformly over the vast duration of time, so the laws and processes governing the present conditions were applicable to the remotest past of the earth.[49] This principle of uniformity, moreover, held true in space as well as in time, and the purpose of Lyell's geological world tour was to confirm by observation that a theory induced from the conditions of one place was relevant

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48. Parkman, "The New-Hampshire Ranger," 147.

49. As for the uniformitarian principles of Lyell's geology, I consulted Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow/Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) and Martin J. S. Rudwick's "Introduction" to *Principles of Geology*, vol. 1, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990): vii-lviii. According to Gould, Lyell conflated the two different concepts of uniformity under the same rubric: that is, the methodological uniformity of law and process and the empirical or hypothetical uniformity of the geological transformations. The first one was to do with fundamental assumptions that "natural laws are constant in space and time," and that "if a past phenomenon can be rendered as the result of a process now acting, do not invent an extinct or unknown cause as its explanation." These were not to be tested in experiment or fieldwork, but to be presupposed before any scientific inquiry. On the other hand, the latter concept of uniformity was a hypothesis of the earth's history, something to be examined, controverted, and revised. The discussions in *Principles of Geology,* Gould argues, flitted back and forth from the one concept to the other, so wittingly or not, Lyell warranted his hypothesis through the confusion of methodological and substantive claims. See Gould, *Time's Arrow/Time's Cycle*, 115-26. The above-cited lines are from pp. 119 and 120.

in some other places, too. His *Principles of Geology* abounded with the "analogies" among different places (especially in volumes 1 and 3), and he even labeled his own discussion "the arguments from analogy" or the "reasoning from analogy."[50] In fact, his first geological examination on the American land led him to realize the deep correspondence of widely separated localities. The surface of the rocks in Eastern Massachusetts, he observed at the very beginning of his first travelogue, "wherever the incumbent gravel or drift has been recently removed, is polished, furrowed, and straited, as in the north of Europe, especially in Sweden, or in Switzerland, near the great glaciers."[51] "The foreign naturalist," he elsewhere maintained, "indeed sees novelty in every plant, bird, and insect; and the remarkable resemblances of the rocks at so great a distance from home are to him a source of wonder and instruction."[52] Lyell thus stressed that there was a geological uniformity or deep connection across the globe, despite the apparent diversity on the surface. This was the sum and substance of his geological excursions through the North American continent, and the rest of his two travel accounts were packed with other evidence for "a greater uniformity" in the geological formation "throughout a large part of the globe."[53] Although he often referred to the social and cultural distinctions between America and European countries, individual differences on the surface level were somehow cancelled in the context of geological antiquity. Individuality was a skin deep, and everything was found connected in depth.

From the viewpoint of uniformitarian geology, therefore, there was nothing wrong with Parkman finding the deep connection between the histories of the New World and the Old. As Wai Chee Dimock points out, the geological scale enlargement along the temporal axis cancelled small differences like social and cultural boundaries and geographic diversities. What the idea of geological deep time highlighted was "a set of longitudinal frames, at once projective and recessional, with input going both ways, and binding continents and

50. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 3: 384.

51. Lyell, *Travels*, 1: 5.

52. Lyell, *Travels*, 1: 17-18.

53. Lyell, *Travels*, 2: 17. Lyell's other observations on the geological uniformity across the universe can be found, for example, in *Travels*, 1: 49-51, 64, 107, 110, 191-92, 204; 2: 35, 103-5, 109; and *Second Visit*, 1: 201, 212, 254; 2: 76-77, 150, 180, 185, 187, 194-95, 198, 205.

millennia into many loops of relations, a densely interactive fabric."[54] Once restored to "this broadened and deepened landscape," what would American history look like then?[55] As far as Parkman was concerned, the American soil was connected deep with the universal antiquity. His daydream of the European civilization down in the desert cave was the act of reading the inscriptions of deep history, historical connections in depth. Each locality had its own historic associations and memories in layers, but at the same time, it was also related to other distant places deep underneath the surface diversity.

Parkman's North American colonial history often went beyond its geographic confines. In his rendering, the New World situations were understood in connection with the Old World conditions, just as the two continents were geologically connected in depth. The story of the heyday of the French colony under the rule of Count Frontenac in the late seventeenth century, for example, was regularly coupled with the Versailles scenes and other European circumstances when "the sun of Louis XIV. had reached its zenith" (*CF*, 138). The historical import of the French and Indian War also was evaluated in conjunction with the European contingencies, like the consummation and subsequent decay of the Bourbon monarchy and the rivalry among the continental nations (*Montcalm and Wolfe*).[56] Parkman's histories were composed in such a broad context as not to be delimited within a particular locality or nation. This widened perspective — even wider than the panoramic viewpoint to capture the American geographic expanse — was possible at least with the historical imagination that modern geology worked on: the imagination of expanded temporal and spatial

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54. Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time* (2006; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009): 3-4. "Deep time" is the phrase first coined by John McPhee's geological travelogue in *Basin and Range* (1980), and that refers to the modern concept of uniformitarian earth history. Dimock employs the idea of "deep time" to enlarge the temporal and spatial scale of American literary history and restore it to the global setting. Although Dimock's use of "deep time" is metaphorical for the most part, I am indebted to her suggestion on the methodological validity of the geologically enlarged perspective.

55. Dimock, *Through Other Continents*, 28.

56. As for the general course of European history, Parkman drew on Michelet and Ranke. See Doughty, *Francis Parkman*, 165-66n.

network.

V. Geological Deep Time and the Nation-State's Programme of Remembering and Forgetting

Of course, the model of geological deep time was not the completion of historical narrative. By way of conclusion of this chapter, let us examine the problems of Parkman's "history in depth," especially in terms of its implications with the American nation building.

Geological deep time might have been a particularly American brand of temporality. Its vertical time perception promised America yet another possibility of independence from the horizontal authority of European history. America found its history grafted onto that of the vast landmass, which proved to be tremendously long and enduring, and this enlarged time-scale legitimatized American history. "[R]ather than thinking about temporal change in terms of the progress of history from east to west, the old *translatio imperii*, deep time situated the nation atop a vast compendium of rock strata saturated with millions of years of natural history, progressing upwards from the remote past toward the present-day world of the surface. Hence, American nation might be described as emerging through time from below rather than arriving on the eastern seaboard as the residue of European history."[57] In the case of Parkman's history writing, geological deep time could have had such a globalizing effect on historical understanding as we have just seen above, but as far as its impact on American society at large was concerned (and Parkman himself was never exempt from it either), geological deep time offered the possibility of a nationalistic interpretation of the past. Time was found incarnated in the land itself, and the popularization of geology gave the American people a felt connection to their own unique "history in depth."

One of the major scenes buried in the depth of American history was that of a horrible tragedy, the bloody persecution of the indigenous tribes. In his first historical account, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, Parkman pronounced that his objective was to portray the American Indians "at the period when [they] received their final doom" (*CP*, 347). Then was his

57. Allen, *A Republic in Time,* 168.

history meant to expose a series of atrocities the white settlers had inflicted upon the Indians, and to remind his readers that the development of American society had been owing much to such victimization of the indigenes? Obviously, the answer was negative. He uncovered various historic associations of the continent, many of which came from the aboriginals' past, such as their "sonorous" place-names long obliterated under the foundation of modern towns.[58] The past sounded only sonorous to him; it never haunted, tormented, nor disturbed him. It was just reduced to a docile part of national history.

When Parkman compared the Indian to a rock — "the Indian is hewn out of a rock" (*CP*, 389) —, his history of American rock should have been a different one, with more attention to the undiluted and unromanticized truths of Indian rock. As it was, however, the metaphor fell halfway short of the mark. From his perspective, the continental landmass, including the stratum of Indian rock, offered the past to the nation, although it actually was not an offer from the former, but an exploitation on the latter's end. In his characterization of the Indian race, the rock symbolized its "fixed and rigid quality" and "stern, unchanging features," which might indeed "excite our admiration from their immutability," but fundamentally indicated the irreclaimability of the dead past, just like a well preserved fossil (*CP*, 389). A substratum of American national history as it was, the formation of Indian rock did not affect the present social conditions in any meaningful way.

Parkman's "history in depth" helped the Americans to appreciate how closely the remote past lay underneath their feet, and familiarize themselves with national history. Insomuch as the geological time-scale was measured in vertical layers of strata, however, history was imagined in a hierarchical order, where the present, always placed on top, secured the best advantage over the past sedimented underneath. Once again, the very concluding passage of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* revealed this power structure implicit in Parkman's history writing.

> Neither mound nor tablet marked the burial-place of Pontiac. For a mausoleum, a city has risen above the forest hero; and the race whom he hated with such burning

58. Parkman, "Indian Antiquities in North America," 428.

rancor trample with unceasing footsteps over his forgotten grave. (*CP*, 846)

Parkman guided the reader's attention to the buried past, but at the same time, he saw nothing wrong with public forgetfulness or trampling over the burial place of the Indian hero. On the contrary, this sort of collective amnesia was a part of the nation-state's standard operating procedures, just as was the case with the excavation and recollection of historical events. The simultaneous programme of remembering and forgetting somehow sterilized memories of things past, turning an arch enemy of the white settlers (the American Indian) into a national icon, and a terrible cruelty (the genocide) into a part of national history. "Having to 'have already forgotten' tragedies of which one needs unceasingly to be reminded turns out to be a characteristic device in the later construction of national genealogy."[59] One must remember something, but a part of which it is obligatory to forget. And then, the double gesture of identification and estrangement produces the surprisingly smooth face of national history.

Parkman's "history in depth" promised easy accessibility to the past, which was found right there underneath the surface ground. It also tamed the past, whose jagged crudity was safely filed away in the course of remembering/forgetting. In the final analysis, Parkman, too, was unable to fully emancipate himself from the static view of history. Although he intended to record historical changes or the dynamism of temporality, his narratives presupposed the undisputed superiority of the present, from the vantage point of which, the past was overlooked and tucked into an orderly scale. Missing in his history was the destabilization or historicization of the present, which was always changing and receding into the past at any moment. The task was left to evolutionary history in the next generation.

59. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London: Verso, 2006): 201.

Conclusion: The Temporalization of American History

The whole discussions in the present thesis point to this all too general and clichéd question: What is history?[1] Or just to make it any clearer, what was history in its American practice from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth specifically? The time was, as we have seen so far, when a renewed concept of temporality or historicity was taking hold among the Western intellectual community, as it grew out of the mythological and biblical preconceptions of the static, fixed universe. The world turned out to have been mutable and unstable ever since its way far distant beginning and, even now, be open to change at any moment. Instead of being within the ancient category of *historia*, a systematic and static order of facts, then, modern history writing was to recognize the dynamics of temporal changes and describe the causal chains of the past, present, and future. America, newly independent during the very period, was a new reality to the world order, an embodiment of historical change and the reformed temporality. Writing about America, therefore, was facing up to the problem of historical change, or how to put down the temporal process of ongoing transition. Immediately after the Revolutionary War, a series of historiographical enterprises launched themselves, like those of Jeremy Belknap, Ebenezer Hazard, Jedidiah Morse and others, and since then, American historians had described and defined the still young nation, featuring different aspects of its history. They were all nationalistic undertakings on one level or another, to be sure, but they were also a collective effort to represent the historical dynamics of the world in perpetual transition and, in so doing, renovate the method of history writing.

First of all, it was not permissible to squeeze a history of the new nation into the traditional master narrative of the eternal order. The task of early national historians was to set America free of Puritan's prophetic, or they might say, superstitious history, as well as

1. The question is always paired with Edward Hallett Carr's famous book, although Carr's lecture series would be better titled "What Is an Historian?" See Carr, *What Is History?: The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered at the University of Cambridge January-March 1961* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).

the dark past of the Old World. Just as American independence was the very embodiment of the Enlightenment ideas of man and society, the historians were quite willing to view the past from the same enlightened and rational standpoint.[2] It was a logical choice for them to stick to solid facts and individual source materials themselves, which had been taken for something predetermined and self-evident within the typological framework but was now free and open to rational and empirical interpretations. They set out to collect and preserve all the scattered materials pertaining to America. Their endeavor looked rather obsessive even to the point of being labeled "the cult of facts."[3]

A new disinterested story had to be composed of materials scratched together anew. What Peter Dear says of the seventeenth-century scientific revolution was as valid for American history writing in the early national era: each particular fact and event "could not be *evident*, but it could provide *evidence*" for a new generalization.[4] Predictably enough, early American historians took an example from the method of modern inductive sciences, and tried to establish a science of history for themselves. For Belknap, history writing was an expression of enlightened rationality supported by a collection of solid evidence, and Jared Sparks pushed the case further to identify history with "the inductive philosophy in science."[5] The foundation of the American Historical Association in 1884 was a moment of

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2. Lawrence Buell points out the post-Revolutionary ambivalence toward Puritanism. The early national "liberal" era exploited Puritan history and legacy as an origin of the national self, but at the same time continually distanced itself from Puritanism or its rigid, irrational, and anti-liberal orthodoxy. See Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 193-213.

3. Carr touches upon the nineteenth-century cult of facts in *What Is History?*, 5-6. See also Michael Kraus, *A History of American History* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937): 171-83.

4. Peter Dear, *Discipline & Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995): 25. Drawing on Dear's argument, Mary Poovey delves further into the nature of the modern fact. See Poovey, *A History of Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 7-28, especially for the distinction between self-evident universals and particular evidence for a generalization.

5. Jared Sparks, "Preface to the First American Edition," William Smyth, *Lectures on Modern History,* vii.

official recognition of the collective laboratory method of history, and Henry Adams's thermodynamic history was nothing if not a consummation of nineteenth-century scientific history and its maxim of historical objectivity. Francis Parkman also set history on par with natural historical sciences or, among other things, modern geology.

In their attempt at framing a general narrative out of amassed facts, American historians had a difficult problem pertaining to all the inductive undertakings. That is, how to leap over the gap between discrete individual materials and one unified historical account. A collection of documentary facts, however numerous, never spoke a coherent story for themselves, but they wanted a certain frame of reference, within which they were first to be interpreted and evaluated as legitimate evidence or not. This version of the "problem of induction" illustrated that history writing always involved the interpretive assessment of evidential facts on the part of historians, no matter how this procedure seemed to conflict the notion of historical objectivity.[6] Thus the handling of individual historical facts was a constitutive conundrum of nineteenth-century scientific history. Professedly disinterested and value-free, historians actually had their own theoretical assumptions to begin with. The episodes of nineteenth-century scientific history were ultimately about the noble but aborted dream of historical objectivity and the recurrent return of the historian's suppressed self.

Spatiality was another basic component of American history writing from the early national era through the nineteenth century. Since the colonial period, one of the major ways to describe America had been through the writing of its nature, which grew to be a native literary genre called "the literature of place."[7] Early American history writing, too, incorporated a significant amount of geographic and natural historical descriptions into itself. Or, let me rephrase this way: American national history was a part of the literature of place, so nature, geography and other physical realities of the New World were its prime concern, far from being just a backdrop for historical events and people. The American

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6. As for the problem of induction, see Dear, *Discipline & Experience*, 11-31; and Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). See also Chapter Three of the present thesis.

7. Pamela Regis, *Describing Early America*, 25-38.

forest, especially, constituted a core part of American life and its history, as Belknap and Parkman suggested in their writings respectively. In his political allegory, Belknap equated the nation with the forest, its inhabitants with the Foresters, and its history with that of their forest management. His American forest was imagined both primordial and man-mediated: it had been the great source of florae and faunae since time unknown, as was cataloged in his third volume of *The History of New-Hampshire*, and at the same time, it was also a field to be divided, reclaimed, and replanted among the Foresters, thus providing a basis for their industries in the so-called "America's Wooden Age."[8] The management of the forest was a fit metaphor for nation building. In the case of Parkman's "history of American forest," the spatial reality of the wild woods gave an overall framework to his narrative, where human history was paired with the long-term natural cycle of the forest. When he compared the practice of history writing to the control of the "uncultured and unreclaimed" wilderness (*CP*, 348-49), he must have assumed that the relationship between the forest and man was what early American history was all about.

Spatial or geographic concerns introduced visualizing effects to history writing. Emma Willard's "history in perspective" and other cartographic representations of history, for instance, were motivated by the desire to comprehend the course of history at one view. Parkman's colonial history also, featuring spatial migrations over the continental expanse, involved map collecting, mapmaking, and verbal map representations to grasp history from a sweeping point of view. While the scientific side of nineteenth-century American history highlighted hard empiricism with its particular details, the spatial or geographic aspect featured the abstract, panoramic vision of history. Especially in Parkman's history writing, the macro- and micro-scopic viewpoints worked alternately, and this double optics of panoramic abstraction *and* down-to-earth substantiality corresponded closely with the making of American personality.

Geographico-history looked atemporal and ahistorical in its presentation of history on a static continental expanse, but it was the age of universal temporalization and historicization

8. Cf. Brooke Hindle, ed., *America's Wooden Age: Aspects of Its Early Technology* (Tarrytown: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1975).

in the Western intellectual community, and American nature also grew to be contextualized in its dynamic process of historicity. In Parkman's history writing, again, the dimension of temporality was located deep under the ground, as his idea of historical change was informed by modern geology. America was still a young nation with a lifetime of only a century or so, but it also had such an immense scale of history, seen from the perspective of geological deep time. America was new and at the same time quite old or even pre-historic in the contemporary geological imagination.

Or to put it this way: the nation, notoriously lacking in the traditional resources of historical association, established its history as something directly grafted onto that of the continental landmass. When the earth was historicized around the nineteenth century, its inhabitants accordingly confirmed the historical legitimacy of their own being in a larger chronological scale. This is what happened in contemporary American society, and newness and antiquity thus coincided in its idea of history.

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Students of early national and antebellum American literature are continually pulled back to Ralph Waldo Emerson.[9] That goes for the present thesis on the process of secularization and temporalization in early American history writing. In his lectures and essays, the Sage of Concord hinted quite casually of the whole point of the foregoing chapters. By way of concluding the present thesis, then, let us examine how the problems of American history writing were epitomized in Emerson's idea of history.

As we have seen so far, one of the crucial problems of American history writing lay in the handling of the individual (individual people, individual events, and individual

9. I totally agree with Irving Howe, when he says there is a so-called Emersonian climate in American culture. "To confront American culture is to feel oneself encircled by a thin but strong presence: a mist, a cloud, a climate. I call it Emersonian, an imprecise term but one that directs us to a dominant spirit in the national experience." Howe, *The American Newness* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986): i.

documents). It was, in other words, the problem of how to reconcile the uniqueness and typicalness of individual components in the overall systematization. If one put a stress on the former, unruly individuals refused to integrate themselves into a whole; and if the latter was highlighted instead, each individual drowned its own unique identity in the general unity. And this problem of individuality was a focal point on which early American history writing and Emerson's philosophy of history converged, and as was always the case with Emerson's dialectic argumentation, he introduced a remarkable model of individuality, which miraculously resolved the conflict between discrete particularity and general unity in historical narrative.

Although Emerson openly depreciated history and lamented over the contemporary attitude of retrospectiveness, he attended to history with apparently paradoxical pertinacity. Aside from the frequent references to the term, he began his first essay collection with a discussion on history,[10] and even chose for the title of his lecture series in 1836-37 "The Philosophy of History." History, conceived as distant "then" and "there," was what his philosophy of "eternal Now" had to overcome.[11] In the course of the deliberate confrontation between the present and the past, he then renovated history and suggested an ideal, if problematic as well, type of historical individual.

The first introductory lecture of "The Philosophy of History" focused upon the role of the individual in history and the last one was aptly titled "The Individual." To begin with, Emerson explained about the historical development of the individual, which traced way back to ancient Greece: "In Greece, certainly, the individual begins to emerge, and we form acquaintance with persons, rather however from collateral record than from the formal history. But individuals recede again in Rome into the nation, and are more entirely lost in

10. That is, "History" in *Essays: First Series*. The essay is reprinted in *Essays & Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983): 235-56. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with its abbreviated title, H, and page numbers in parentheses.

11. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Philosophy of History*, reprinted in *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964): 158. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with its abbreviated title, *PH*, and page numbers in parentheses.

the wars of Europe in the Middle Ages" (*PH*, 8). And after a long interval, the age of individuals had come with the birth of American democracy, and the true object of history then was man, the individual, "the portraiture in act of man, the most graceful, the most varied, the most fertile of actors" (*PH*, 9). Emerson's encomium was unbounded for the individual, by which he meant in this context a solid body equipped with natural-born potency, in contrast with the artificial and fictional power of conventional institutions.

And yet, the demise of the individual was to come all too soon. Even while Emerson's praise for the individual still reverberated in the air, he flatly downgraded the very same individual only a couple of pages later. "All our education," he maintained, "aims to sink what is individual or personal in us, to stimulate what is torpid of the human nature, and so to swell the individual to the outline of this Universal man and bring out his original and majestic proportions" (*PH*, 12). What really mattered in turn was the "Universal man," also known as "the Universal mind," "Spirit," "Over-Soul" or some divine principles that govern the whole universe. In one of other lectures that follow, the individual was taken for even "The antagonist nature to this Universal mind" (*PH*, 84). Hence a logical question: why was such a radical change possible in the characterization of the individual? Or why did Emerson bother about individuality anyway if his argument would soon desert it for universality?

For those initiated into Emerson's transcendental philosophy, the answer might be evident in the above-quoted line. The point is the "elastic" capability of the individual, which enables one to "swell... to the outline of the Universal man" and identify with the divine spirit. In other words, the Emersonian individual was the one who could alternately expand and contract in its signification, so that the distinction between individuality and universality turned out to be not valid actually. At first, "individual" denoted something familiar, real, and personal. History had to be a story of common everyday people, not in the least to do "with an Alaric or a Bourbon, with fighters or lawmakers" (*PH*, 20). The personal "me" was, however, the one who could also detect a universal analogy among all human experiences, and thus the individual man was sublimated into universal "Man," "the one Mind common to all individual men" (*PH*, 11; H, 237). A crucial statement was set forth in

the concluding lecture "The Individual."

> The Individual Man in the order of nature is of that importance, of *that elastic and evergrowing magnitude as to arrest and deserve the entire influences of nature and society upon himself*.… As the mind unfolds it does not show itself as an adjunct to society but it becomes the central point from which all other individuals must be regarded. Others exist to illustrate to the individual the riches of his nature, to embody his thoughts, to fulfil the predictions of his spirit, to publish in the colors of the pleasant light the secrets which preexisted in the closet of the mind. (Italics mine; *PH*, 176)

This mechanism of elasticity worked every time Emerson addresses the issue of the individual. The Emersonian individual resided at once in "now and here" as a real and personal entity with a temporally and spatially finite body and in "the everlasting Now, and the omnipotent Here" as an ideal being identical with the universal mind (*PH*, 90).

The elasticity of the individual was *the* primary requisite for Emerson's philosophy as a whole, so it recurred throughout his writings. *Nature* (1836), for example, featured an extremely elastic self and its ready switch back and forth between microscopic and macroscopic outlooks. Indeed Emerson first admitted "The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequalities in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception of differences. Therefore is Space, and therefore Time, that man may know the things are not huddled and lumped, but sundered and individual."[12] Still, while our attention was directed to individuals, differences, Space and Time, his vision suddenly leapt high into the region of the universal laws: "Time and Space relations vanish as laws are known" (*N*, 27). His terminology connoted the same instant alternation between individuality and universality. His words — especially, such major terms as "nature," "soul," "idea," "man," and the like — always bore the individual and universal connotations at the same time, whether the first letter was capitalized or not. At one

12. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature,* in *Essays & Lectures*, 27. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with its abbreviated title, *N*, and page numbers in parentheses.

moment, "nature" signified natural objects in the physical world, but next, without warning, it turned to something more holistic, spiritual, and supernatural. "Self" in "Self-Reliance" always implied both the individual self and the universal self. The process of the individual/universal reciprocation was usually occult but intrinsic to nature, and man had the power to discern signs of the universal mind in individual entities and thread them one after another into a uniform chain. Emerson named a poet, among others, as the one "whose eyes integrate all parts" (*N*, 9).

History didn't remain unaffected by the alternate expansion and contraction of the individual, either; or on the contrary, it was one of the principal fields where its elastic nature was fulfilled to the utmost. All the historical events were now found to be both unique and general, and a historian, just like a poet, synthesized them into the universal order of human history, which in turn revealed itself microcosmically in each component part. Following this individual/universal reciprocation in each historical event, history necessarily acquired the same elasticity in its perspective. It alternately zoomed in and out as it were, shuttling back and forth between individuality and universality, and grasped at once the innermost nooks and crannies of individual lives and the panoramic general view of universal history. Its perspective was, in Emerson's own phraseology, "elastic as the gas of gunpowder... instantly our heads are bathed with galaxies, and our feet tread the floor of the Pit."[13] Hence the maxim of his transcendental history: "the hours should be instructed by the ages, and the ages explained by the hours. Of the universal mind each individual man is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him" (H, 237).

The whole history is incarnated in each person's private life, so that "the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds, this is the most acceptable,

13. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men: Seven Lectures*, in *Essays & Lectures,* 622. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with its abbreviated title, *RM*, and page numbers in parentheses.

most public, and universally true."[14] Typically, Emerson first zoomed in to a most obscure private life, and the next moment his viewpoint soared up to the transcendental zoom-out platform (just like a transparent eye-ball looking down from the hill) to recognize its identity with the general flow of human history. Every history writing had to start with most individual and personal facts, and then confirm their universality or direct connectedness with the universal mind, and come back again to individuality. "In like manner, all public facts are to be individualized, all private facts are to be generalized. Then at once History becomes fluid and true, and Biography deep and sublime" (H, 246). When Emerson said "there is properly no history; only biography" (H, 240), what was on his mind was a biography of the individual/universal mind. A historian, he claimed, was possessed of the quick zoom-in-and-out elasticity in perspective, which effectively canceled all the distinctions between particular and general, past and present, and public and private, and reduced or rather inflated everything to be one and the same as the unified whole.

The best example of the zoom-in-and-out elastic historiography was, of course, Emerson's own *Representative Men: Seven Lectures* (1850). A collection of biographies of historical celebrities, the whole book was a paean to heroic individuals, just as in Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841). A great man was, according to Emerson, the one "who inhabits a higher sphere of thought" and "has but to open his eyes to see things in a true light, and in large relations" while others took great pains only to end up with false ideas in most cases (*RM*, 616). Without doubt, he was an exceptional individual, "a foreign greatness" (*RM*, 627). A moment later, however, the heroic individual suddenly turned out not so exceptional to distinguish himself completely from other people, nor foreign enough to stand independent and aloof. After all, he was a "representative" man: representative of the general population, or more significantly representative of the universal mind which he shared with all. At the most fundamental level, he was the same with others, being only a part of the whole. Individualism proved

14. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in *Essays & Lectures*, 64. All subsequent citations from this edition are marked with its abbreviated title, AS, and page numbers in parentheses.

nothing, and the prime concern was again what was called the universal mind, soul, or genius — the spiritual kernel of all mankind. "The study of many individuals leads us to an elemental region wherein the individual is lost, or wherein all touch by their summits. Thought and feeling, that break out there, cannot be impounded by any fence of personality. This is the key to the power of the greatest men, — their spirit diffuses itself" (*RM*, 630-31). While dealing with a historical figure in particular, Emerson directed his vision far beyond to the all-inclusive spirit at the same time. This was the way history ought to be. Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, and other geniuses whose biographies were collected in *Representative Men*, were esteemed as long as they were exponents of the universal mind, but not so because they were complete for themselves. The use of great men in history depended on how the study of their individual lives led to "a vaster mind and will" (*RM*, 631).

Here is the most problematic and trickiest part of Emerson's idea of history. Apparently, it duly met the demands of the age of democracy, dragging down heroic exceptionals from their thrones and replacing them with common men, who were found just as good as their superiors, because "Each philosopher, each bard, each actor, has only done for me, as by a delegate, what one day I can do for myself.… What is that but saying, that we have come up with the point of view which the universal mind took through the eyes of one scribe" (AS, 67). And yet, what was the case with great men held true for common men: they, too, were selfless scribes of the universal mind. Every individual, renowned or obscure, was valuable *and* trifling exactly for the same reason that his every action and thought was ascribed to the uniform agency of the Over-Soul. One would infinitely expand to identify with the universe and, in so doing, indefinitely diffuse into nothing.

> We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams.[15]

"I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all" (*N*, 10). It might feel good to be

15. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in *Essays & Lectures*, 269.

embraced by the vital principles of the universe, but it was also an ontological crisis for each individual, who was now only a receiver or even "a passage" for the universal truth to come through. And by definition, the emptier the pathway was, the better. Each individual historical event also was a channel of the universal will, nothing original or unique on its own.

Uniformity or, if applied to the temporal order, eternity was the principal theme of Emerson's idea of history. "The Times are the masquerade of the eternities."[16] The true face of human civilization hadn't changed so far and would never do so henceforth either, and each historical event and chronological era was only a fleeting expression of the eternal physiognomy of the universal mind. If the mission of history writing was, as Emerson insisted, to detect "the oneness or the identity of the mind" through the course of apparent historical changes (AS, 67), then it was not necessary to trace back to the remote past. Just look around now and here, and one would find the same eternal laws working just as well as it did in the past. "All inquiry into antiquity, — all curiosity respecting the Pyramids, the excavated cities, Stonehenge, the Ohio Circles, Mexico, Memphis, — is the desire to do away this wild, savage, and preposterous There or Then, and introduce in its place the Here and the Now" (H, 241). Viewed from this angle, history should be a confirmation of the uniformity, not the diversity, of all human events.

The idea of eternity or uniformity seems incompatible with that of historicity or temporality in usual cases (how could history writing be possible if each historical scene was exactly like the other?). From Emerson's standpoint, however, eternity, as well as uniformity, was what constituted the very essence of history. He considered history in an enlarged time scale which smoothed out and even canceled the superficial differences of motley individualities, so that the distinction between "There or Then" and "the Here and the Now" was not tenable any more. As I touched upon in Chapter Eight, the chief inspiration for Emerson's historiography was uniformitarian geology, and the scale enlargement along the temporal axis was a telling testimony to his espousal of its long and slow temporality. His philosophy of "eternal Now" was not a rejection of history; on the contrary, as James R.

16. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Lecture on the Times," in *Essays & Lectures*, 153.

Guthrie puts it, "Because the rise of transcendentalism coincided with a deeper and more sophisticated scientific comprehension of time's true magnitude, Emerson and Thoreau were among the first generation of westerners faced with the intellectual challenge of integrating ahistorical time with history."[17] Emerson's jeremiad, "Our age is retrospective" (*N*, 7), voiced not the anti-historical injunction — Don't look back —, but rather the mentality of vastly expanded temporality or contemporaneous *now/then* — You don't have to look back because the past can be known from the present.[18] Or, according to the instruction of uniformitarian geology, the present is the key to the past.[19]

In autumn 1836, when Emerson first conceived the idea for his lecture series, which was later titled "The Philosophy of History," he was most likely to have in mind what he had just read in Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*. As Peter Balaam points out, the wording of the journal entry for October 6, 1836 attested that the "principles" of uniformitarian geology worked as a catalyst for his inquiry.[20]

> Shall I call my subject The Philosophy of modern History, & consider the action of the same general causes upon Religion, Art, Science, Literature; consider the common principles on which they are based; the present condition of these severally;

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17. James R. Guthrie, *Above Time: Emerson's and Thoreau's Temporal Revolutions* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001): 208.

18. R. W. B. Lewis gave a definition to "the antihistorical" and "the nonhistorical" respectively, and categorized Emerson into the nonhistorical group. I argue, however, that the seemingly ahistorical attitude of Emerson's is an expression of his idea of the enlarged time scale. See Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955): 161.

19. See, for example, Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, I: 165. "The geologist who yields implicit assent to the truth of these principles, will deem it incumbent on him to examine with minute attention all the changes now in progress on the earth, and will regard every fact collected respecting the causes in diurnal action, as affording him a key to the interpretation of some mystery in the archives of remote ages."

20. Peter Balaam, *Misery's Mathematics: Mourning, Compensation, and Reality in Antebellum American Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 36.

> and the intellectual duties of the present generation & the tendencies of the times inferred from the popular science.[21]

Allegedly, Emerson was critical of the unpoetic, mechanical outlook of *Principles of Geology*, even commenting in a letter to Margaret Fuller on October 20, 1836: "Lyell did not please me, for it was only a catalogue of facts."[22] Nonetheless, modern geology, which he elsewhere

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21. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965): 218.

22. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939): 41

Why did Emerson castigate Lyell's geology then? His criticism proves very understandable if we take a look into *Principles of Geology*. Except the first four chapters of Volume 1 (where Lyell summarized the history of earth sciences up to the late eighteenth century), the book was actually packed with observed facts of geological phenomena across the world. From the perspective of inductive science, it made every sense, of course, because Lyell's point lay in dispelling preconceived stereotypes about earth history with an accumulation of empirical data. And yet, this was where Emerson and Lyell parted with each other. While Lyell were preoccupied with collecting the observed samples of geological analogy across the world, Emerson wanted to go one step further to the final analogy, that is, "the analogy that marries Matter and Mind" (*N*, 26).

> [M]an is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. He is placed in the centre of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man. All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life. (*N*, 21)

When Emerson said "man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects" (*N*, 21), this was not just about detecting the principle of identity among natural objects, but the analogy between nature and man. For him, natural science had to correspond with moral science. As for geology, all the facts accumulated in geological researches should have been translated in a human or moral sense. Emerson must have noticed the moral and symbolic possibilities in uniformitarian geology, especially in its vision of the universal analogy in depth, which perfectly went with his theory of all-encompassing Spirit. That was why he was fascinated with modern geology, and that was also why

named as one of "the most perfect of the sciences,"[23] had been among his most lasting inspirations throughout his literary career, and his discussions on enlarged-scale history took its cue from Lyell's geology and its uniformitarian worldview. "Geology," Emerson once claimed, "has initiated us into the secularity of nature, and taught us to disuse our dame-school measures, and exchange our Mosaic and Ptolemaic schemes for her large style."[24] Through the geological perspective, nature could be restored to "her large style," and Emerson's transcendental philosophy was about the performance of the individual in that original largeness of nature. The Emersonian elasticity of the historical individual or its shuttling back and forth between uniqueness and wholeness was warranted in the context of the geological scale enlargement.

Emerson's idea of history has great importance in understanding the nature of early American history writing, because both shared the problem of individuality and its context of universal mutability and transiency. The contemporary historians' interest, as well as Emerson's, centered on the issues of how to record the transient reality in its transiency without nailing it dead static in the conventional order of things, and how to balance the uniqueness and typicalness of individual components in a coherent narrative form. Emerson's solution might look like a product of poetic intuition, and actually, it was not directly applicable to the regular practice of history writing. And yet, his history of elastic individuality and enlarged temporality had the same generic roots as other contemporary pieces of history, which were simultaneously descriptive and abstract, paratactic and panoramic, local and universal, and new and ancient.

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he couldn't tolerate its stopping short of the full realization of the possibilities.

23. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Relation of Man to the Globe," in *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959): 46. In the same lecture, Emerson paired geology with the other perfect science, astronomy.

24. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature" (*Essays: Second Series*), reprinted in *Essays & Lectures*, 546.

Nothing in the universe stands still, only we human beings stop to think. While we take time to figure out what is going on at any given moment, things never stop changing and happening. This is a fundamental fact for our sense of temporality and historicity. The present thesis is a story of the time when people recognized it for the first time and tried to understand the world through the renewed framework of dynamic temporality.

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